Like a Warhorse Bridled in Gold:
A STUDY OF THE AESOPIC FABLES OF BABRIUS

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I, Sonia Pertsinidis, certify that this thesis is my own original work

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a comprehensive study of a little known collection of Aesopic fables written by Babrius in the first to second centuries CE. Part I provides the necessary contextual background for this study and a discussion of the style of the work. Part II offers a detailed study of the dominant themes of the collection and the moral framework. Part III demonstrates how Babrius' fables contribute to our understanding of human relationships and emotions as understood in the early Roman Empire.

Babrius' fable collection is not widely known to classicists. Scholars who have examined the collection have generally confined their attention to questions of textual history. Many have viewed the text as the product of an inferior poet from the Second Sophistic period. The only pre-existing and in-depth study of the collection to date adopts a narrow theoretical viewpoint. There is a need for a modern, comprehensive and insightful study of Babrius' fables that brings the true value of the collection to light.

The aim of this thesis is to inspire classicists to take greater interest in Babrius' fables as one component of an important, but often neglected, tradition of ancient fables. It presents a modern and detailed study and it evaluates afresh the stylistic attributes of the collection. It demonstrates the usefulness of the fable collection as a sourcebook and it offers new perspectives on the material contained within the collection. In addition, it seeks to make an original contribution to the field by applying an interdisciplinary approach that links the discipline of classics with cognitive and social psychology.

A core argument of this thesis is that the stylistic aspects of Babrius' fables have been unduly criticised. This thesis will demonstrate that the stylistic devices employed by Babrius contribute to the effectiveness of his storytelling and the delivery of the morals. It will also demonstrate that the collection successfully balances irony, satire and comedy. The combined result of these techniques is a text that has a clear moral agenda but is also engaging and entertaining.

A second argument of this thesis is that it is not possible to identify a consistent and overarching ideological message in Babrius' collection of fables. The collection presents a number of survival tactics and strategies for negotiating life's difficulties while, at the same time, reinforcing the importance of certain key moral virtues such as moderation and self-reliance. This moral scheme held currency for people at all levels of the social hierarchy in the early Roman Empire, regardless of their status or power.

Thirdly, this thesis will argue that Babrius' work is unique among ancient fable collections in the way in which the narratives portray the psychology of the protagonists. This unique aspect of Babrius' fables can be of use to classicists who are interested in studying ancient emotion and the way in which the ancient Greek and Roman understanding of emotion differs from our own.

ABBREVIATIONS

Modern editions are cited below by the editor's name and the year of publication. Full publication details can be found in the bibliography. In addition to the standard abbreviations for ancient works, the following abbreviations are used for ancient fables and related texts:

B	Babrian fable in Luzzatto and La Penna (eds.) 1986: 1-140.
CPG	Leutsch and Schneidewin (eds.) 1958: 1-348.
LSJ	Liddell, Scott and Jones (eds.) 1968.
P	*Augustana* fable in Perry (ed.) 1952: 321-411.
Ph	Phaedran fable in Guaglianone (ed.) 1969: 3-87.
T	testimony in Perry (ed.) 1952: 211-241.
VD	text in van Dijk (ed.) 1997: 400-568.

All translations of Greek and Latin are my own unless otherwise indicated.

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INTRODUCTION

Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.[1]

In contemporary times, fables are widely regarded as stories for children. Countless editions of fable books have been printed for this purpose over the centuries.[2] For many, the mention of fables conjures images of animal characters gifted with the power of speech. They are also regarded as humorous, moralizing tales that have inspired familiar expressions such as 'sour grapes', 'a wolf in sheep's clothing', and 'the lion's share'.[3] Aside from children's literature, however, fables are often retold in modern media for the purposes of social commentary and political satire.[4] Fables have been tailored to modern comics and graphic novels,[5] they are being utilised for research into child development,[6] and they have been adapted to the modern business world for the purposes of training and education.[7] The diverse purposes for which fables are used in the modern era testify to the fact that these stories are deceptively simple yet have an abiding capacity to captivate, entertain and instruct.

The earliest known written examples of fables are from the ancient peoples of Sumeria and Akkadia.[8] Although the Sumerians did not have a term specifically for 'fable',[9] stories which may be termed fables have been identified in collections of proverbs, sayings and animal similes as well as in larger epic

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[1] Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.69-70.

[2] One of the finest examples of such collections is V. S. Vernon Jones' translation of Aesop's fables, illustrated by A. Rackham and introduced by G. K. Chesterton (first published in 1912). For a thought-provoking study of fables and other stories as a means to 'civilize' children see Zipes 2006. The virtues of various editions of fables for children are also discussed in Carlson 1993 and Hedges 1968.

[3] For a discussion of these and similar expressions see Blackham 1985: xii.

[4] E.g. Learmonth 2009; BEK 2009; Boukalas 2008; Hickman 2007 and Brenner 2007.

[5] E.g. the modern comic strip Ο Καλός Λύκος devised by Αρκάς. On fables and the graphic novel see Bragard 2007.

[6] Jose, D'Anna and Krieg 2005.

[7] Short and Ketchen 2005; Snowden 2000.

[8] Perry 1959: 25-8; Lambert 1960; Williams 1956a.

[9] Falkowitz 1984: 3.

works such as the *Instructions of Šuruppak* (2500 BCE)[10] and the *Etana* (1800 BCE).[11] It is likely that many of these fables were circulated and retold as part of an oral tradition prior to being recorded in literary form.[12] Therefore, although the earliest written examples from Sumer are at least four and a half thousand years old, it is likely that the oral tradition from which these stories originated is even more ancient. The fable is undoubtedly one of the most enduring and adaptable of narrative forms.

Prior to the discovery of fables from Sumer, it was not uncommon for the origin of the fable to be attributed to Greece or India.[13] Today, it is thought that elements of the Mesopotamian fable tradition coming from Assyria, Babylon and Asia Minor were introduced into the predominantly oral traditions of Greece in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE.[14] Thus the fable is just one example of the cultural inheritance that the Greeks received from Mesopotamia and western Asia.[15]

In the hands of the Greeks, the fable is said to have passed through a series of successive phases.[16] Prior to the Alexandrian age, the fable only ever appeared in a specific context. It was not an independent literary form but a device employed on a specific occasion in order to illustrate or reinforce a particular argument.[17] The earliest extant Greek fable, for example, is Hesiod's fable of the

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[10] West 1984: 109.

[11] Williams 1956b: 70. Also see Gordon 1960.

[12] See Böck and Luzzatto 2009.

[13] See Handford 1956: xiii-xiv; Oldaker 1934: 85. On the question of the relationship between the Indian fable tradition (particularly the fables in the *Jātaka* and *Panchatantra*) and those of ancient Greece see Hausrath 1909; Barrett 1948-1949: 70; Thite 1984: 33-53; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 306-328; Derrett 2002: 519-520.

[14] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 293. For an overview of the animal fable from ancient times (including Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and the Near East) to the twenty-first century see Fansa 2009: 17-131. On the fable in ancient Egypt in particular see Germond and Livet 2001: 210; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 328-333; Brunner-Traut 1977.

[15] Perry 1959: 25.

[16] Perry 1959: 28.

[17] Perry 1959: 29.

hawk and the nightingale.[18] This fable is told in the course of a lengthy cautionary lecture delivered by Hesiod to his brother Perses in which Hesiod exhorts his brother to settle their dispute over an inheritance and to follow the path of justice.[19]

Elsewhere in ancient Greek literature, fables are referred to in rhetorical arguments, speeches in Greek tragedies, historical accounts, comic plays, lyric and iambic poetry, philosophical discourses and scientific treatises.[20] Sometimes, fables are related in full while at other times, fables are only alluded to. This suggests that a mere allusion to a fable could be sufficient for a fable to be recognised. This practice, together with the wide variety of texts in which fables appear, indicates that fables were a widely known and widely used narrative form in ancient Greece.[21] Furthermore, they were not viewed as trivial or suitable only for children. Socrates is said to have spent his last days versifying fables and devising his own,[22] while Aristotle recommended that fables be used as examples (παραδειγμάτα) in rhetorical reasoning.[23] In addition to this, Aristophanes refers to the practice of 'going over' Aesop's fables (Αἴσωπον πεπάτηκας).[24] These references suggest that fables were considered to be an intellectual resource and that it was a mark of learning both to know the fables and to be able to recall and adapt a fable to suit a particular occasion.

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[18] Hes. *Op.* 202-212.

[19] See discussion in van Dijk 1997: 127-134.

[20] E.g. Arist. *Rh.* 2.20 1393b8-17; Plu. *Dem.* 23.4-5; A. *A.* 715-736; S. *Aj.* 1140-1162; Hdt. 1.141.1-4; D.S. 19.25.5-6 and 33.7.6; Ar. *V.* 1399-1405, 1427-1432, 1435-1440; Ar. *Av.* 472-475, 652-653; Ar. *Pax,* 127-134; X. *Mem.* 2.7.13-14; Pl. *Phdr.* 259b-d and *Phd.* 60C; Arist. *Mete.* 2.3 356b13-15 and *HA* 9.32 619a18-20; Nic. *Ther.* 343-358. For a discussion of Aristophanes' use of fable see Pertsinidis 2009.

[21] Van Dijk 1997: 366.

[22] Pl. *Phd.* 60B-C. For discussion see Roochnik 2001; Compton 1990.

[23] Arist. *Rh.* 2.20 1393a23-1394a18.

[24] Ar. *Av.* 471.

The second phase of the Greek fable is said to have begun in the Alexandrian age when the fable appeared in isolation and without any context in prose collections.[25] The first such collection of fables is thought to have been compiled in the fourth century BCE by Demetrius of Phalerum.[26] Diogenes Laertius states that Demetrius produced collections of 'Aesopic fables' (λόγων Αἰσωπείων συναγωγαί) and he lists a book by Demetrius specifically entitled the *Fables of Aesop* (Αἰσωπείων α').[27] The ostensible purpose of this lost collection was to present a series of fables that could be adapted to various literary and rhetorical contexts.[28] It has been suggested that the fables in this collection may have been introduced by promythia which served as a subject index. In this way, the collection would have constituted a useful source book of fables for rhetoricians, poets and prose writers.[29]

The third phase in the history of the fable is said to have taken place in the first and second centuries CE and it was marked by an entirely new development: the production of fable collections in verse that were presented as independent works of literature.[30] Fables were written for the first time in Latin verse by Phaedrus, writing in the early first century CE, and in Greek verse by Babrius, writing in the first to second centuries CE. Both of these poets played a vital role in elevating the literary status of the fable. Owing to their influence, the fable was for the first time presented as an independent narrative form that had literary and artistic merit apart from the context or purpose for which it was being used.[31]

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[25] Perry 1959: 29.
[26] For a detailed discussion of this lost collection see Perry 1962.
[27] D.L. 5.80-5.82.
[28] Perry 1962: 340; also Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 410-496.
[29] Perry 1962: 340-342.
[30] Perry 1959: 29.
[31] Blackham 1985: 13-15.

In addition to the fable collections of Babrius and Phaedrus, the first to second centuries CE also produced the *Life of Aesop*,[32] an anonymous text that contains a fictional biography of Aesop and a collection of fables known as the *Collectio Augustana*.[33] Aesop was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the father of fable[34] and today his name continues to be synonymous with fables. He is reputed to have been a slave[35] who lived in the sixth century BCE and was possibly of Phrygian or Thracian descent.[36] The *Life of Aesop* traces Aesop's period of service as a slave on the island of Samos to his manumission, his adventures in the East and the circumstances of his death in Delphi. Aesop is simultaneously depicted as a fool and a wise man, a trickster and a teacher.[37] In modern fable scholarship, the *Life of Aesop* is regarded as a fictional work and Aesop is regarded as a legendary figure.[38]

Following the second century CE, the influence of the fable continued through the writings of Lucian of Samosata.[39] In the fourth or fifth centuries CE, Avianus, who depended heavily on Babrius' fables, wrote a collection of 42 fables in Latin elegiac couplets which was popular throughout the Latin Middle Ages.[40]

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[32] The Greek text of the *Vita G* (MS 397 of the Pierpont Library in New York) which is the oldest version of the *Life of Aesop* is reproduced in Perry 1952: 35-77.

[33] According to Perry, the *Collectio Augustana* is the largest and oldest extant collection of Aesopic fables in prose. The compilation was probably made in the second century CE but is based on an earlier fourth or fifth century archetype (Perry 1965: xvi). Another prose collection of fables is contained in the *Papyrus Rylands* 493 dated to the first or second centuries CE but it is fragmentary (see Perry 1965: xiv). The *Collectio Augustana,* which is also known as Recension I, consists of 231 fables in alphabetical order. The manuscript itself (the *Augustanus Monacensis* gr. 564) dates from the thirteenth century CE (see Zafiropoulos 2001: 24). For a discussion of the other recensions (the *Vindobonensis* with 130 fables and the *Accursiana* with 127 fables) and their relationship to the *Collectio Augustana* see Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 90-100; also Rodríguez Adrados 1970.

[34] See van Dijk 1997: 98-104.

[35] Hdt. 2.134-5.

[36] See T4-7: 215-216. Also Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 271-273.

[37] For a useful discussion of the events and themes of the *Life of Aesop* see Wills 2006. On the structure of the narrative see Holzberg 2002: 76-84.

[38] Holzberg's suggestion that Aesop is a type of "mythic embodiment" of a typical storyteller from the East is one solution to the problem of Aesop's historical identity (see Holzberg 2002: 16).

[39] Blackham 1985: 23-32; Holzberg 2002: 27-29.

[40] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 100; 2000: 254-273.

During this period, a prose collection of fables in Latin also appeared, accompanied by a letter under the pseudonym 'Romulus'.[41] Meanwhile, Babrius' fables continued to gain exposure when prose versions of his fables appeared in the Middle Ages, as well as in the Byzantine Age when Ignatius the Deacon produced imitations of Babrius' fables.[42]

In the twelfth century, Marie De France produced a collection of Aesop's fables in verse that was popular throughout Europe.[43] The first significant edition of Aesop's fables was Heinrich Steinhöwel's edition of 1476–7 which included fables from Babrius and Avianus. It was this edition that was printed in English by William Caxton in 1484.[44] Caxton's edition was enormously popular and it initiated seventeen reprints.[45] Many other editions followed. John Ogilby, for example, produced a translation of fables in verse in 1651;[46] Robert L'Estrange published a collection of fables as a schoolbook in 1692;[47] Samuel Croxall published an edition of *Aesop's Fables* in 1722[48] and Samuel Richardson produced an edition of fables in 1740.[49] Numerous modern writers and poets have since published editions of fables. Some of the most famous include the fables of the seventeenth century French poet and fabulist Jean de La Fontaine, the verse fables by the English poet John Gay, and the fables of Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Kriloff.[50] Fables have spread far and wide throughout the world. They have been translated into Japanese, Chinese, Malay and the language of the

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[41] See Böck and Luzzatto 2009.
[42] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 100; 2000: 493-514.
[43] Blackham 1985: 54.
[44] Patterson 1991: 18.
[45] Blackham 1985: 38.
[46] Cottegnies 2008: 134.
[47] Cottegnies 2008: 131.
[48] Blackham 1985: 85.
[49] For a discussion of Richardson's edition see Lewis 1996: 28-29.
[50] Patterson 1991: 41-43, 139ff; Fernandes 1996.

Aztecs.[51] Today, various versions and translations of fables, both ancient and modern, can be located with ease and speed on the Internet.[52]

While historians of literature have embraced the fable genre, classicists are less familiar with the extant texts that preserve this narrative form. Fable scholarship is a small field within the wider discipline of Classics and the study of Greek and Roman fable collections as works of ancient literature is a relatively untapped area of study.[53] Holzberg suggests that one reason for this is that comprehensive yet accessible studies of the genre are lacking.[54] The more substantial studies that do exist, particularly those by Hausrath, Nøjgaard, Rodríguez Adrados and Jedrkiewicz, tend to adopt a narrow theoretical viewpoint and, because of this, they hold greater appeal to those who are already specialists in the field.[55] Other scholarship on the fable collections has, to a large extent, been confined to studies of the textual history of the various ancient fable collections in both prose and verse.[56]

Consistent with this trend, Babrius' fables have not attracted a great deal of attention from classicists.[57] The only scholar to have engaged in a detailed study of Babrius' fable collection as a work of literature to date is Nøjgaard.[58] Nøjgaard approaches the Babrian fables from a structuralist perspective. He

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[51] For fables in Japanese see Shinmura 1965; for fables in Chinese see Yang and Yang 1981; for fables in Malay see Sanusi 1960; and for a discussion of how Aesop's fables fared among the Aztecs see Brotherston 1972.

[52] E.g. Laura Gibbs' website *Aesopica: Aesop's Fables in English, Latin and Greek* at <<http://mythfolklore.net/aesopica/index.htm>>.

[53] While it is impossible to measure the extent of the field with precision, it is perhaps indicative that only 89 works with the word 'fable' in their titles were produced in the period between 1926 and 2007 compared to 1,028 works with the word 'myth' in their titles that were produced in the same period. Source: *L'Année philologique* (accessed 12 November 2009).

[54] Holzberg 2002: 7.

[55] Holzberg 2002: 7-8.

[56] The prose fable collections include the *Collectio Augustana* and its adaptations and the *Aesopus Latinus*. The verse fable collections include those of Phaedrus, Babrius and Avianus.

[57] Within the category of ancient authors, the name Babrius has appeared in only 84 scholarly works in the period between 1930 and 2007. Source: *L'Année philologique* (accessed 12 November 2009). A discussion of the scholarship on Babrius appears below.

[58] Nøjgaard 1967: 189-365.

discusses character, plot, time, space and various other topics, all with a view to advancing the argument that Babrius, by introducing small variations into the fables, transformed the structure and significance of the traditional fable.[59] Nøjgaard's analysis is highly theoretical and complex and it is concerned more with matters of form than content. As such, there are many topics of interest that are not explored by Nøjgaard and there is significant potential for the application of different theoretical perspectives and approaches to the Babrian collection.

Against this brief overview, my goal is to present a modern and comprehensive study of Babrius' fable collection, both in terms of the contribution of Babrius to the fable tradition and the significance of his collection as an important work of ancient literature. This thesis seeks to encourage greater recognition of the Babrian fables, to present new approaches to the fables and thereby to make a useful contribution to scholarship. Part I of this thesis presents an overview of Babrius' social and literary milieu and examines the style and genre of the fables. It considers the significance of Babrius' work as a product of the Second Sophistic period and the connection between Babrius' fables and the genres of satire and comedy. It also presents the first detailed examination of the literary devices employed by Babrius, including direct speech, irony and (in Chapter Four) a discussion of the use of internal evaluative strategies. Part II presents the first comprehensive discussion of the key themes of the fable collection and the moral framework that underpins the fables. It compares Babrius' fable collection with the *Augustana* as well as the fables of Phaedrus and argues that the moral content of Babrius' fables is just as important as his literary objectives. It then discusses to what extent the morals of the fables may reflect the moral views of broader society in the early Roman Empire. Part III demonstrates the value of the Babrian fables in contributing to our understanding of society in the early Roman Empire. Firstly, it examines how the fables present various

[59] Nøjgaard 1967: 8.

social and personal relationships and, secondly, it studies the use of various emotion-terms in the fables. The study of how certain emotions are conceptualised and portrayed within the moral framework of the fables represents an entirely new avenue of study and one that may be of value to a wide range of scholars who are interested in understanding Greek and Roman emotion and how the conceptualisation of emotion in these cultures differs from our own.

I. The Restoration of Babrius' Fable Collection

In 1842, at the Holy Monastery of Megisti Lavra on the peninsula of Mount Athos in Greece, a number of manuscripts were located by Minoides Minas. Minas had been sent on a mission by Abel Villemain, head of the French Department of Public Education, to obtain ancient Greek manuscripts as part of a revival of interest in Greek archaeology and antiquities. One of the manuscripts that Minas sighted contained two prologues and 123 fables written in Greek verse. A copy of the manuscript was brought to Paris and identified as part of a collection of fables written by Babrius. In 1844, this copy was published by the French classical scholar Boissonade.[60] After Minas managed to acquire the original, he sold the manuscript to the British Museum where it is currently housed (Add. 22087).

The medieval manuscript from Athos, now known as the *Codex Athous*, is one of the principal sources for the text of Babrius' fables. The manuscript itself has been dated to the tenth century CE[61] and it comprises 40 folios.[62] It includes corrections and notes made by the Byzantine editor Demetrius Triclinius.[63] Prior to the discovery of this manuscript, Babrius' fables were known to scholars only in the form of fragments, quotations or paraphrases.[64] In the late eighteenth century, for example, Tyrwhitt had studied a number of fables which contained traces of versification and which, he reasoned, were derived from Babrius.[65] In the following century, Schneider published 23 fables which he deemed to be

[60] Irigoin 2003: 364-366. Minas made a number of corrections to the copy he gave to Boissonade. He also forged six lines of text in order to complete the final fable. Boissonade published this copy and it was accepted by scholars as genuine until the original codex was re-examined and published by Eberhard and then Crusius (see Vaio 2001: xxvii). Minas later produced a collection of ninety-five fables which were proven to be forgeries (see Oldaker 1934: 89).
[61] Vaio 2001: xxii.
[62] Irigoin 2003: 367-368.
[63] Vaio 2001: xxvi-xxvii.
[64] Perry 1965: lxvi.
[65] Tyrwhitt 1785.

from Babrius and Knoche published a dissertation on Babrius.[66] The discovery of the *Codex Athous* was significant because, for the first time, it enabled classicists to directly study a collection of fables from an ancient fable book ascribed directly to Babrius.

Unfortunately, the fable collection that is preserved in the *Codex Athous* appears to be incomplete.[67] It contains 122 complete fables and one fragment. The fables are divided across two books, each of which is introduced by a prologue. The majority of fables from the second book appear to be missing, as the fables are ordered alphabetically but the collection ends with fables that commence with omicron. In various attempts to reconstruct the complete fable collection, scholars have examined fables and fable fragments that appear in three other medieval manuscripts, namely, the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 777, Codex 397 of the Morgan Library, and the *Codex Vaticanus Barberianus* 354. In addition to these manuscripts, three ancient papyri have been used as sources for reconstructing the text: the *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus* 10.1249, *Papyrus Amherst* 2.26 and *Papyrus Bouriant* I. There is also a wax tablet schoolbook known as the *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae* which contains Babrian fables and has been dated to the third century CE.[68]

Armed with this array of evidence, various scholars have devoted themselves to a number of complex questions about the textual history of the Babrian fables. These questions pertain to matters of authorship; the relationships between the manuscripts that contain Babrian fables and other manuscripts; the sources on which Babrius may have relied; the relationship between the fables of the *Codex Athous* and other ancient fable collections; and the relationship between the

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[66] Schneider 1812; Knoche 1835.

[67] See Luzzatto 2009.

[68] These are the principal sources for the text. For a detailed listing of the prose paraphrases, indirect sources (particularly the *Suda*) and various imitators of Babrius (including Avianus, Ignatius and Syntipas) see Vaio 2001: xxiii-xxv.

verse fables of Babrius and other ancient fables in verse. These questions have fuelled the last two hundred years of scholarship on the Babrian fables: work for which the textual history of the fables has been the primary focus.[69]

In the late nineteenth century, the work of Hesseling and Crusius dominated the field. Hesseling examined the third century *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae* containing fables of Babrius,[70] while Crusius' dissertation of 1879 presented a number of important conclusions about the period in which Babrius lived.[71] Just before the turn of the century, Crusius' important and influential edition of the Babrian fables was published.[72] The first half of the twentieth century saw scholarship on the *Papyrus Amherst* 26,[73] comments on Crusius' work[74] and a discussion of Codex 397 of the Morgan Library and its relationship to the Babrian fables.[75] The latter half of the twentieth century saw a continuation of interest in questions of textual history. Perry, for example, engaged in a detailed discussion of the collection of fables compiled by Demetrius of Phalerum.[76] He also analysed the contribution made by Babrius (and Phaedrus) in the introduction to his 1965 translation of their works.[77] Vaio has contributed a number of important articles including a discussion of Babrius and the Byzantine fable in the 1984 volume *La fable*.[78] Between 1979 and 1987, Rodríguez Adrados published a detailed textual history of extant fable collections including a study of Babrius' Mythiambi.[79]

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[69] Holzberg 2002: 62.
[70] Hesseling 1892-1893.
[71] Crusius 1879; also Crusius 1883.
[72] Crusius 1897.
[73] Radermacher 1902; Ihm 1902.
[74] Immisch 1930.
[75] Husselman 1935.
[76] Perry 1962.
[77] Perry 1965: xlvii-lxxiii.
[78] Vaio 1984; also 1970; 1977; 1980 and 1994.
[79] Rodríguez Adrados 1979-1987; revised and updated by G.-J. van Dijk and translated into English by L. A. Ray (see Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 100-119; 2000: 175-219).

A critical edition of Babrius' fables has been published by Luzzatto and La Penna.[80] Prior to this it was Lachmann's edition of Babrius' fables published in 1845, and Crusius' critical edition that were relied on for studying the fables of Babrius.[81] Only three major English translations of Babrius' fables have been published: an 1860 edition by Davies that is no longer readily available,[82] Hull's illustrated book of fables translated into English verse and published in 1960[83] and Perry's 1965 translation of the fables of Babrius into English prose.[84] A French edition of the fables was published in 1973.[85] Collections of fables translated into English sometimes also incorporate fables from Babrius.[86] The only detailed commentary in English on the Babrian fables is that of Rutherford which, although published in the late nineteenth century, is still useful.[87] The present study relies on the most recent edition by Luzzatto and La Penna[88] as supplemented by the important emendations, observations and notes that are made by Vaio in his study published in 2001.[89] The Luzzatto and La Penna edition comprises 144 fables, the first 123 of which are derived from the *Codex Athous*. The remaining 21 fables have been supplied from the other manuscripts and sources mentioned above.[90]

In the *Codex Athous*, the fables are presented alphabetically according to the first letter of each fable. The collection also includes two prologues, one at the

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[80] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986.
[81] Crusius 1897; Lachmann 1845.
[82] See Perry 1965: lxxii.
[83] Hull captures the lively spirit of the fables but his rigid use of verse is an impediment and his translations are also, at times, inaccurate (e.g. the translation of fable no. 39 in Hull 1960).
[84] Perry's prose translations are more accurate than Hull's but his language is outdated. See, for example, the speech of the fox in B77 (Perry 1965: 97).
[85] Herrmann 1973.
[86] In Gibbs' *Aesop's Fables* (2002), for example, six hundred fables from a variety of sources (including some from Babrius) are translated and presented according to theme.
[87] Rutherford 1883.
[88] Reviewed by Ferrari 1988.
[89] Reviewed by Jennings 2002 and Gutzwiller 2004.
[90] See Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: XI-XXII. In addition to the 144 fables of Babrius, the editors have reconstructed twenty-one additional fragments from prose paraphrases. These are in a poor state and, for this reason, they do not form part of this study.

beginning of the collection and another that is inserted after fables beginning with lambda. Scholars disagree as to whether the alphabetisation of the collection is original. Luzzatto thinks that the alphabetisation in the *Codex Athous* is authentic.[91] Nøjgaard thinks that the alphabetisation of fable collections may reflect an ancient tradition although he adds that the separation of the collection into two books appears to be quite arbitrary.[92] Holzberg observes that the alphabetisation of fables is followed in the other Byzantine manuscripts and he suggests that starting the second book with fables beginning with the letter 'M' (for Μῦθος) is logical.[93] Perry maintains that the alphabetisation is not the work of Babrius but was imposed by later editors of the text.[94] Vaio is also convinced that the composition of the original fable collection was significantly different from the alphabetical arrangement of the Byzantine manuscripts.[95] Although scholarly opinion on this question remains divided, the issue has little bearing on the present study, which examines the collection as a whole.

There are three questions related to the textual history of the collection that are important for the purposes of this study. The first concerns the authorship of the collection, a question on which scholarly opinions differ. Luzzatto and La Penna, for example, conclude that only half of the fables and fragments that are presented in their edition were written by Babrius.[96] Rodríguez Adrados agrees with the conclusion that some of the fables from the *Codex Athous* are not from Babrius.[97] Rodríguez Adrados engages in a detailed study of the fables that appear in the *Codex Athous* and the choliambic fables that are preserved

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[91] Luzzatto 2009.
[92] See Nøjgaard 1964: 511-513; 1967: 351.
[93] Holzberg 2002: 54-55.
[94] Perry 1965: lvii-lix.
[95] Vaio 2001: xxxiii.
[96] See the *apparatus criticus* in Luzzatto and La Penna 1986. For a discussion of the sources that Babrius may have used see the same volume: XII-XVIII.
[97] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 105.

elsewhere.[98] In short, he concludes that the 143 fables attributed to Babrius in Perry's edition actually belong to two types. The first type are extended and literary fables which can be attributed directly to Babrius. The second type are short schematic ones, such as the tetrasticha, which can be attributed to an imitator.[99] Although both types are consistent in terms of metre, Rodríguez Adrados maintains that the 'true' Babrian fables demonstrate a preference for descriptiveness, expansion, direct speech, and the 'situation' fable.[100]

The current state of scholarship with respect to these questions is reflected in Vaio's introduction to his notes on the text.[101] Vaio considers both internal criteria and external evidence and tends toward a view that supports Babrius as sole author of the 143 fables in the collection, including the tetrasticha. Even so, Vaio does not rule out the possibility of contamination, interpolation within fables or the shortening of fables. Vaio maintains that the choice between variant versions in the manuscripts can only be made by examining sense, style, syntax, prosody and meter. This study relies on Vaio's thorough examination of all of these factors.

The second question concerns the authenticity of the two prologues that are contained in the *Codex Athous*. Again, scholars have expressed different opinions on this question. Nøjgaard regards both prologues as the work of Babrius,[102] as does Perry.[103] Holzberg holds the view that the first prologue is authentic and that the second prologue was inserted into its current place by a later editor.[104] Rodríguez Adrados views both prologues as the work of Babrius but he asserts that the "second book was published years after the first, with a

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[98] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 175-219.
[99] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 211-212. For a summary listing of the fables that Rodríguez Adrados attributes to a Pseudo-Babrius refer to the same volume at 219.
[100] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 215-216.
[101] Vaio 2001: xlvii-li.
[102] Nøjgaard 1967: 344.
[103] Perry 1965: xlvii ff.
[104] Holzberg 2002: 54.

group of imitators having arisen meanwhile."[105] Vaio agrees.[106] My own view is in line with that of the majority: that both prologues are probably the work of Babrius. My reasoning is that the tenor and content of the two prologues is consistent with the overall collection. Furthermore, the inclusion of prologues is consistent with the practice in other ancient fable collections, such as that of Phaedrus. Lastly and most compelling is that the first prologue included in the tenth century *Codex Athous* manuscript is virtually identical to a prologue found in the *Papyrus Bouriant* 1 dated to the fourth century CE. This suggests that the prologues were not altered in any significant way over time.[107] In this thesis, I will approach both prologues as part of the original text. In particular, I will examine the authorial voice that is projected through the prologues and the manner in which they serve as a framing device for the fables in the collection.

The third question concerns the moral tags or epimythia that appear after 61 of the 143 fables. Early editors such as Crusius bracketed all of the epimythia to indicate that they were considered spurious, while later scholars, such as Nøjgaard and Rodríguez Adrados, have adopted the opposite view.[108] Luzzatto considers the question in some detail and concludes that only the metric epimythia are plausibly genuine.[109] Vaio maintains that the authenticity of the metrical epimythia cannot be determined according to their presence or absence in the other manuscripts or paraphrases and that each moral must be evaluated according to internal criteria.[110] My own reading of the text has led me to the conclusion that, for the most part, the epimythia are superfluous. This view, combined with the possibility of corruption, has led me to conclude that it is not necessary to examine the moral tag that accompanies every fable or to regard

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[105] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 103.

[106] Vaio 2001: xxxiii.

[107] See Collart 1926: 25-27; also Vaio 2001: 1-15.

[108] Crusius 1897; Nøjgaard 1964: 489ff; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 443-465.

[109] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: XCVI.

[110] Vaio 2001: xlv. During the course of his notes on 87 of Babrius' fables, Vaio queries 28 of the epimythia on the basis of metrical or syntactical oddities (e.g. B29, B34, B60), remote applicability to the fable (e.g. B9, B12) and sense and style (e.g. B13, B33, B87 and B96).

each moral tag as part of the fable text. At times I will refer to a moral tag to raise a point of particular interest but, for the most part, the epimythia do not form part of this study.[111]

As mentioned above, there has been comparatively little interest in the literary aspects of the fables as opposed to questions of textual history. The only detailed study of Babrius' fables as a work of literature is that of Nøjgaard, although his structuralist analysis of the Babrian fables has not led to a great deal of interest or comment.[112] Other more recent scholarship on the Babrian fables is piecemeal and tends to focus on specific topics, such as: interpreting particular fables in Babrius' collection;[113] analysing the style and metre of the fables;[114] comparing Babrius and other authors, both ancient and modern;[115] discussing the vagaries of his name[116] and commenting on the place of the Babrian fables within the broader literary genre.[117] Boreckij and Kronik have taken a rather different approach by using lexical analysis to study the social and artistic milieu of Phaedrus, Babrius and Avianus, thereby attempting to discern how these poets viewed social and interpersonal relations.[118]

A welcome contribution to the study of Babrius' fables is the chapter on fable in Morgan's study of popular morality in the early Roman Empire.[119] Morgan aims to outline a 'map of the ethical landscape' of the period by examining various themes that recur in fable collections. In doing so, she has broadened engagement with the text of Babrius' fables more than most fable scholars to date, by examining and interpreting the content of the Babrian fables as well as

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[111] For a discussion of the problematic relationship between fable narratives and their epimythia throughout the history of the ancient fable see Nøjgaard 1979.
[112] See the reviews by Rodríguez Adrados 1965-1970.
[113] See for example Vaio 1994; Menna 1983; Møller Jensen 2004.
[114] Luzzatto 1975; Luzzatto 1985.
[115] Arens 1961; Heller 1930; Giurdanella-Fusci 1910.
[116] Vaio 1980.
[117] García Gual 1978; Irmscher 1978.
[118] Boreckij and Kronik 1978; also Boreckij 1978.
[119] Morgan 2007: 57-83.

relating this content to the ethics of the first and second centuries CE. Morgan's chapter on fable, however, is not devoted exclusively to the fables of Babrius, and it is necessary to carefully differentiate those conclusions that pertain to Phaedrus and those that pertain to Babrius.

In order to advance recent scholarship and to balance the work on the textual history of the Babrian collection, there is a need for a current, comprehensive and focussed study of Babrius' fables both as a work of ancient literature and in terms of the collection's significance for our understanding of the society and culture of the time. The primary aim of this thesis is to fulfil this need. It seeks to acquaint modern classicists with Babrius' fables and to provide a clear and systematic study of the work. It aims to inspire new interest in Babrius' fables by moving away from scholarship on the textual history of the fables toward the exploration of new topics, new approaches and new interpretations of the text. It seeks to answer new questions such as what literary and stylistic devices Babrius employs in his fables and how these devices make his fables more effective as narratives. How, and to what extent, does Babrius' collection intersect with the genres of satire and comedy? What are the core themes of the collection and why are certain themes predominant? How does Babrius use emotion-terms in the fables and in what contexts? What can the use of emotion-terms tell us about how certain emotions were viewed from a moral standpoint? How does the ancient understanding of emotion differ from our own? In addition, it seeks to resolve longstanding questions such as: is Babrius' primary objective to entertain or to instruct? What views do the fables offer on religion, friendship and family and what values do these views reflect? Does the content of the fables, as some have argued, aim to reinforce upper class ideology?

Fable scholarship is ripe for a study of Babrius' collection. With the benefit of previous scholarship on the textual history of the fables, it is appropriate now to

begin work on the content of the fables themselves. The critical edition by Luzzatto and La Penna together with the detailed notes supplied by Vaio form a solid foundation from which to analyse the text. A number of important general studies of fable collections are also now in existence, particularly those by van Dijk and Rodríguez Adrados.[120] In addition to this, there have been two recent developments in classical scholarship that suggest that a current and detailed study of Babrius' fables is a timely and worthwhile task. The first development is the aforementioned chapter by Morgan which relates the Babrian fables to the ethical landscape of the first and second centuries CE. The second development is the work of a number of scholars of the past thirty years on the ancient novel, a form of literature that emerged from the same period as Babrius' collection but one that is only now receiving greater recognition.[121] These two developments suggest that there are fruitful avenues to pursue in terms of fostering a greater appreciation for the Babrian fables and gaining useful insights, by means of the fables, into the literature and society of the early Roman Empire. The results of this study will hopefully convince others that Babrius' fable collection deserves greater attention as a work of ancient literature.

[120] Van Dijk 1997; Rodríguez Adrados 1979-1987.

[121] For a detailed account of past and present readings of the ancient Greek novel, the changes in approach and the reasons for those changes see Swain 1999: 3-35.

II. Defining Features of the Fables

Modern definitions of the fable tend to be very broad in scope. Perry defines the fable in terms of its structure as a fictional narrative in the past tense, and according to its content, as a story that says something indirectly and inexplicitly.[122] Nøjgaard defines the fable as a fictitious story with a moral action of evaluation that involves characters that must be interpreted allegorically.[123] Rodríguez Adrados' definition combines a number of different features. He defines the fable as a short, simple and clearly defined story that narrates a unique and concrete event that has taken place at another time and is symbolic.[124] He adds that the fable tends to concentrate on the theme of nature, and that it has elements of satire, criticism and deterrence.[125]

One feature that is common to all of the abovementioned definitions is the metaphorical quality of the fable. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle defines a metaphor as 'the addition of a name to something' (ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορά).[126] Aristotle also states that metaphor is a mode of speech that is 'solemn' and 'grand' (σεμνός) because it avoids the use of ordinary language.[127] According to Aristotle, mastery of metaphor is the most important skill of all for a speaker but this skill is innate and it cannot be learnt from others. The skilful use of metaphor depends on an intuitive ability to see likenesses in things that appear dissimilar to others.[128]

Aristotle's discussion of metaphor in the *Poetics* focuses primarily on the effective use of this device by a speaker; but there is another aspect of metaphor that is important, namely, the interpretation of metaphor by an audience. As

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[122] Perry 1965: xxi-xxii.
[123] Nøjgaard 1964: 82. This definition is criticised by Rodríguez Adrados (see 1999: 26).
[124] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 32.
[125] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 33.
[126] Arist. *Poetics* 21, 1457b6-7. For discussion of this passage see Kirby 1997.
[127] Arist. *Poetics* 22, 1458a21.
[128] Arist. *Poetics* 22, 1459a4-8.

Perry suggests, the interpretation of metaphor requires more thought, and a more subtle kind of thinking, than is required for the interpretation and understanding of explicit statements.[129] Paradoxically, however, the use of metaphor can also assist in the conceptualisation and transmission of an idea because it creates a certain distance from the object that is under scrutiny, thereby allowing an audience to view that object and evaluate it in a more impartial way. In the fable, the ultimate object under scrutiny is man himself, so the sense of distance and objectivity that is created by the fable–metaphor is critical for the effective delivery of the evaluation or realisation. Throughout the course of this study, we will return to the concept of the fable as metaphor and how it may be interpreted.

In Babrius' own fable collection, he refers to his fables in the first and second prologues simply by using the term μῦθος.[130] In the first prologue, for example, Babrius connects the telling of μύθοι with the legend of wise old Aesop.[131] In the second prologue, Babrius ascribes the invention of μύθοι to the time of Ninos and Belos and then mentions Aesop and Libyan μύθοι.[132] The term μῦθος is just one of a number of terms that were used to describe the fable, including the Greek terms μῦθος, αἶνος and λόγος and the Latin terms *fabula*, *apologus* and *fabella*.[133] Van Dijk notes that all of these terms are polysemous.[134] The term μῦθος, for example, can refer to a word, speech, advice, a plan, tale or story.[135] However, as van Dijk observes, when the term μῦθος is connected with the name of Aesop, as it is in Babrius' first and second prologues, there can be little doubt that the sense of the term is simply 'fable'.[136] Van Dijk's study of the terminology indicates that Babrius' use of the term μῦθος is consistent with the

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[129] Perry 1959: 28.
[130] See prologue I, line 16; prologue II, line 1.
[131] Prologue I, lines 14-16.
[132] See prologue II, lines 1-6.
[133] See van Dijk 1997: 79-111.
[134] Van Dijk 1997: 110.
[135] See entry for μῦθος in LSJ.
[136] Van Dijk 1997: 110-111.

dating of the Babrian fable collection to the post-Hellenistic period of literature, since the term μῦθος was more commonly used for 'fable' at this time.[137]

What then are the defining features of Babrius' μύθοι? Firstly, there is the choliambic metre in which the fables are written. This is the most obvious feature since it is consistent throughout the collection and it is also distinctive to Babrius as a fable author.[138] The choliamb or scazon ('limping' iambic) is generally characterised by the following metrical pattern (x – ∪ – x – ∪ – ∪ – – –)[139] while the Babrian choliamb is characterised by the following metrical pattern (x – ∪ – x – ∪ – x – – ∩).[140] The Babrian scazon is unique among examples of Greek iambic because of the way in which the ictus of resolved feet is handled.[141] More specifically, the last syllable of a dissyllabic word and the last two syllables of a polysyllabic word are always exempt from the ictus,[142] as in the following example from B22 (line 5): ἦρα | γυναικ|ῶν δύο | νέης | τε καὶ | γραίης|. In addition, the penultimate syllable in the last foot is always accented.[143] Finally, there is Babrius' use of anapaests in the first foot and his frequent usage of trisyllabic feet.[144] All of these practices show that Babrius' versification is closer to the Latin tradition rather than the Greek, as similar practices have been observed in the work of poets such as Martial, Phaedrus and Seneca.[145]

A second defining characteristic of the collection is that all of Babrius' fables can be described as fictitious stories that present an event or series or events.[146] This

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[137] Van Dijk 1997: 110.

[138] There are only two other fable books in verse apart from the one by Babrius. Phaedrus' *Fabulae Aesopiae* is written in Latin iambic senarii, and Avianus' *Fabulae* is written in Latin elegiac couplets. For a discussion of the significance of Babrius' choice of metre see Chapter Two.

[139] Halporn, Ostwald and Rosenmeyer 1963: 130.

[140] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: XCVIII.

[141] Crusius 1879: 165ff.; Rutherford 1883: xiii-xiv; Perry 1965: liii-lv.

[142] Rutherford 1883: xiii.

[143] Perry 1965: liii-liv.

[144] Crusius 1879: 172ff.

[145] Crusius 1879: 165ff.

[146] On fables as 'fictional stories' see van Dijk 1997: 72.

fictional quality does not exclude elements of realism from the fables, in terms of the characters, the setting, and the portrayal of everyday activities such as hunting, fishing, and farming and conduct in the domestic sphere.[147] These realistic aspects add an air of authenticity to the stories whilst also encouraging the audience to engage with the stories through ready acceptance of the events and characters.

In addition, the vast majority of the fables are set in the past.[148] This 'past tense setting' is usually indicated in the opening line of the fable which contains a verb in the past tense, a particle such as 'once' (ποτέ),[149] or a phrase such as 'in the days of old' (ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς).[150] The effect of this is to give an impression of historicity and actuality to the events even though the precise time at which the events took place is never specified.

The length of the stories, the type of story and the characters are not consistent across the collection. For example, while the majority of the fables in the collection are short, that is, between four and twenty-five lines in length, there are some fables that are much longer, ranging from twenty-eight to over one hundred lines in length.[151] The types of fable also vary considerably throughout the collection, from aetiological fables to agonal fables, mythical tales and aphoristic narratives.[152] These variations mean that we cannot treat all of the fables as being of a single and consistent narrative type. The characters that

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[147] E.g. B1, B2, B3, B4, B26, B34 and B45.

[148] The majority of the verbs used in the fables are either in the imperfect or aorist tense (or in the present but with a past sense e.g. φησί). The rare instances of present tense verbs are in B32.2 (δίδωσι), B35.2 (ἐστιν), B59.3 (ποιεῖ), B67.4 (μερίζει), B116.2 (ἀκούει), B117.5 (συμβαίνει), B118.4 (γίνεται) and B122.12 (φεύγει).

[149] See the opening lines of B3, B21, B29, B31, B32, B51, B85, B89, B93, B94, B97, B105, B106, B115, B117, B121, B134 and B142.

[150] B47.1.

[151] E.g. B12 and B136 (28 and 24 lines in length respectively); B108 (32 lines) and B95 (102 lines).

[152] See Wienert 1925.

feature in the fables are also diverse, ranging from men and animals, to gods, heroes, inanimate objects and personified abstractions.[153]

In addition to these formal and structural characteristics, Babrius' prologues provide some clues as to the purpose of the fables.[154] In the first prologue to Babrius' collection, the fables are said to reflect a form of communication that was possible for a morally superior and 'golden' race of men who existed in the distant mythological past.[155] These men, unlike the present generation of mankind, were able to communicate with animals, gods and trees.[156] The fables are offered as proof that this race once existed, a fact that the author is keen for his young listener Branchus to learn and understand.[157] The ostensible purpose of Babrius' fables, therefore, is to impart an ancient form of knowledge and to engender deeper understanding.[158]

Babrius also self-consciously refers to his poetic style in the prologues. In the first prologue, he speaks of softening his stinging iambic lines, adorning his verse with flowers, and offering a sweet honeycomb to his audience.[159] In the second prologue, he presents a metaphorical description of his fables as a warhorse bridled in pure gold (καθαρῷ χρυσίῳ χαλινώσας / τὸν μυθίαμβον ὥσπερ ἵππον ὁπλίτην).[160] This image is particularly striking and, in my view, it is an apt description that encapsulates both the purpose and style of Babrius' fables. The warhorse is an impressive and robust animal that can be used in battle to break through defence lines. In a similar way, fables break through

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[153] See van Dijk 1997: 34-35.

[154] The content of the prologues will be discussed in detail in Chapters Two and Four.

[155] Prologue I, lines 6-7.

[156] Prologue I, lines 8-13.

[157] Prologue I, lines 14-16.

[158] Not all fable scholars recognise this as one of Babrius' principal aims. Rodríguez Adrados, for example, says that Babrius "seems to consider the fable as a literary exercise more than anything else" (Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 24). Chapter Four of this thesis is devoted to arguing against this view and demonstrating the clear moral and didactic purposes of Babrius' fables.

[159] Prologue I, lines 17-19; Vaio 2001: 12-15.

[160] Prologue II, lines 7-8.

intellectual defences by confounding those who seek to interpret the stories in a literal way and presenting outcomes that defeat usual expectations. In Blackham's words, they get "past the garrison of resident assumptions" because they represent a "tactical manoeuvre to prompt new thinking."[161] At the same time, Babrius' warhorse is also bridled in pure gold, signifying the stylistic ornamentation that is also characteristic of Babrius' fables. Babrius is careful to impress on his audience that his style differs from that of his various imitators.[162] In this way, Babrius indicates that he not only wishes to introduce his audience to different ways of thinking and viewing the world but, at the same time, to delight and impress.

Thus, the purpose of Babrius' fables is twofold: on the one hand it is moral and didactic, while on the other it aims to sweeten the process of learning and understanding by means of its poetic style. A similarly two-fold purpose is mentioned in one of the prologues to the collection of fables written in Latin verse by Phaedrus. In the prologue to his first book of fables, Phaedrus says:

> *Aesopus auctor quam materiam repperit,*
> *Hanc ego polivi versibus senariis.*
> *Duplex libelli dos est: quod risum movet*
> *Et quod prudentis vitam consilio monet.*
> *Calumniari si quis autem voluerit,*
> *Quod arbores loquantur, non tantum ferae,*
> *Fictis iocari nos meminerit fabulis.*[163]

In this passage Phaedrus, like Babrius, expresses the view that there are both profitable and pleasurable aspects to the fable. In a similar way, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* from the second century CE discusses how the pleasurable

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[161] Blackham 1985: xi.

[162] See Prologue II, lines 9-16.

[163] [Aesop is the original inventor of the fables that follow, which I have refined in the metre of senarii. This modest volume has a twofold attraction: it entertains and gives careful counsel for the conduct of life. If anyone chooses to carp and complain that trees are speaking, not to mention beasts, my answer is that I aim to amuse. What follows are fables fabricated in fun.] Translation adapted from Widdows 1992: 3.

dimension of the fable is a necessary accompaniment to its didactic and moral functions.[164]

Like Babrius, rhetoricians of the first and second centuries CE also viewed the didactic and moral functions of the fable as important. Hermogenes, a rhetorician of the second century CE, recommended that fables be taught to young pupils while their characters were still malleable. He also refers to the necessity of fables being fictitious but also 'useful for life' (χρήσιμον πρός τι τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ).[165] Similarly, in the first century CE, Theon defined the fable as a 'fictitious story moulded to form a truth' (λόγος ψευδὴς εἰκονίζων ἀλήθειαν) and he viewed the fable as giving useful advice.[166] Philostratus, in the second to third centuries CE, referred to the didactic function of the fable, saying that the speaking animals of the fables serve to criticize men's faults and to teach children about life.[167] In his treatise entitled 'How the young man should study poetry', Plutarch observes that children enjoy listening to fables because fables do not appear to be serious.[168] Babrius' fables, which are presented in the first prologue in the context of educating a young child, fit within this ancient conception of the fable as having a didactic and moral purpose.

In so far as modern theories of the fable are concerned, the defining features of Babrius' fables that have been identified above agree with the recommendations and conclusions of van Dijk.[169] There is no restriction on the types of characters that feature in the fables, nor is there any limitation on the function of the fable to sociological, moral or didactic functions *per se*. The question of length is left aside because it is, for the most part, irrelevant as is the issue of whether the fables have epimythia or not. The defining features that have been identified

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[164] Gell. 2.29.1-3.
[165] Hermog. *Prog.* 1 (G41 in VD 420-421).
[166] Theon, *Prog.* 3 (G20c in VD 408-412).
[167] Philostr. *Im.* 1.3 (G43 in VD 423-424).
[168] Plu. *Mor.* 14E (G24a in VD 414).
[169] Van Dijk 1997: 34-37.

encapsulate structural as well as purposive elements. They assist in the identification of a fable as Babrian, while at the same time allowing for exceptions and inconsistencies that exist within the collection.

III. Approach and Interpretation

In scholarship, as well as in popular thought, the drawing of a connection between fable narration and the voice of the rebellious slave has been persistent.[170] The brevity and simplicity of this narrative form is thought to have made it well-suited to dissemination among a wide audience, including slaves and the illiterate. Aesop himself is reputed to have served as a slave and the *Life of Aesop* portrays him as an exceedingly clever individual who outwits and outmanoeuvres his master Iadmon at every turn. In spite of the biographical account of Aesop later gaining his freedom, it is Aesop's period of service as a slave that appears to have made the most enduring impression. The collection of fables by Phaedrus has also helped to foster the view that fables express the views of the oppressed lower classes.[171] Phaedrus' fable collection proclaims that fables were invented by slaves so that they could use humorous and fictional stories to freely express their views without attracting censure.[172]

The contrasting view is that fables serve to reinforce the power that is wielded by the ruling classes.[173] According to this view, the upper classes deliberately mould the fables and circulate them among the lower classes of society in order to reinforce the *status quo* and discourage the lower classes from attempting to improve their lot. This view has held considerable sway to date in the interpretation of Babrius' fables. In the light of Babrius' presumed social status and connections (on which, see Chapter One below), his fables have been interpreted as advocating meekness in the face of power and promoting an ideology of conformity.[174]

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[170] Crusius 1913; Spoerri 1942-1943; Jedrkiewicz 1989: 395-406; Cascajero 1991; Hopkins 1993; Rothwell 1995; Fitzgerald 2000.

[171] For a discussion of this view see Zafiropoulos 2001: 30-31.

[172] Book III, prologue 1, lines 33-37.

[173] Meuli 1954; Cascajero 1992: 23-24; Nøjgaard 1967: 191, 353.

[174] Nøjgaard 1967: 363-365.

Recently, scholarship has moved away from the notion that the fables advocate a single ideological message in favour of either the powerless or the powerful. Holzberg, for example, maintains that fables do not embody a single ideological message but instead a plurality of perspectives.[175] Morgan uses Babrius' fables as a source of information on popular morality in the early Roman Empire which she defines as "ethical ideas which were in wide circulation around the Empire and widely shared *up and down the social spectrum*" (emphasis added).[176] Elsewhere, I have argued against the notion that there is a "recurrent tendency" in ancient Greek literature for fables to be used by the lower classes[177] and I have sought to demonstrate that fables were adopted and applied by a wide spectrum of individuals in ancient Greek society irrespective of matters of class or status.[178] The present study follows the same approach. It examines Babrius' collection without presuming that it has a set ideological agenda. Instead, it seeks to demonstrate that the fables can be read as representing 'popular' moral views, that is, views that were both widespread and representative of the majority.[179]

Apart from the question of class content and ideology, a secondary issue is the question of how to approach Babrius' collection. The fables contained within it differ widely in length, the choice of characters and the types of fables, including aetiological fables, debates, myths and allegories.[180] This characteristic of Babrius' fable collection, as well as other collections, has encouraged the view that fables are contradictory and unsuited to systematic analysis.[181] One of the objectives of this thesis is to demonstrate that there are, in fact, unifying features of Babrius' collection. These features include the structural and purposive

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[175] Holzberg 2002: 16-17.
[176] Morgan 2007: 1-2.
[177] A claim made by Rothwell 1995: 235.
[178] Pertsinidis 2009.
[179] For a more detailed discussion see Chapter Four.
[180] McGaughy 1977: 205-214.
[181] Morgan 2007: 15.

aspects of the fables, as well as the themes and moral messages that are reinforced throughout the collection. In this thesis, the primary criterion by which certain themes and moral messages are identified as predominant is their recurrence throughout the collection. The significant number of fables that portray characters suffering negative consequences because of vanity, boasting or greed, for example, suggests that we are justified in viewing vanity, boasting, and greed as core concerns of the collection. By systematically identifying and discussing these unifying themes and features, I will demonstrate that Babrius' collection can be analysed and interpreted in a meaningful way.

As far as individual fables are concerned, however, I recognise that there is the potential for differences of opinion on matters of interpretation. It is well known, for example, that a single fable can produce a variety of possible interpretations and this has been demonstrated in modern research.[182] If it is the case that no two people will interpret the same fable in the same way, does this mean that any, and perhaps every interpretation of a fable is valid?[183] In my view, it is certainly possible to have multiple interpretations of the same fable, and it is also possible for multiple interpretations to be valid, but not every interpretation will be persuasive and compelling, or as persuasive as others. In the following study, I offer my own interpretation of the fables. In many cases, these interpretations have benefited from the comments and criticisms of other scholars who have offered different interpretations and points of view. Nonetheless, I recognise that there is always the possibility of irreconcilable differences in viewpoint.

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[182] In one study, ninety-nine students were asked to read the narrative of a fable and then to give written interpretations of that fable before and after reading an explicitly stated moral point. The hypothesis was that the provision of morals would influence the readers, leading them toward a specific interpretation of the events and actions described and restricting the interpretation that would subsequently be given. The results confirmed the hypothesis. The study found that a much wider variety of interpretations were given before students were exposed to an explicit moral point. Forty-four students refocussed attention on new information following exposure to the moral point while eighty-three engaged in secondary integration of information following exposure to the explicit moral point (Hanauer and Waksman 2000).

[183] For a useful discussion of this question see Morgan 2007: 18-22.

In ancient Greek and Roman times, it was recognised that fables could be interpreted in different ways and utilised for a variety of different purposes.[184] Indeed, it was the flexibility of the fable that made it an ideal resource for rhetorical argumentation and there is no doubt that fables could be used to argue for harm as well as good.[185] If fables could be applied in so many different ways, is it feasible to try to identify a consistent moral framework or approach behind Babrius' fable collection? To answer this question, it is necessary to make a careful distinction between collections of fables that were intended to be used as tools for argumentation and collections which were intended as literary works in their own right.[186] By writing in verse, Babrius is clearly placing his fable collection in the latter category. His fables are presented without any surrounding context or application and they are meant to be appreciated for their own content and literary merits. As a result, the question of how individual fables from the collection might have been applied, by whom and for what purpose, is less relevant. Since the work was intended as a work of literature, it is appropriate to treat it as a unified text and to examine the objectives of the author, the overall tone of the collection, its core themes and the underlying moral messages that emerge from its entirety.

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[184] Van Dijk 1997: 38-78 esp. 73-76; Morgan 2007: 17-22.

[185] Cyrus' aggressive use of the fable of the Flute-Player and Fish is an example of the former (Hdt. 1.141.1-2 discussed in van Dijk 1997: 270-274). Socrates' use of the fable of the Men and Muses to encourage Phaedrus to commit to a 'truly philosophic life' is an example of the latter (Pl. *Phdr.* 259b-d discussed in van Dijk 1997: 327-330).

[186] This distinction is discussed by Perry 1965: xi-xiii.

IV. Outline of Chapters

Part I introduces Babrius and his work. In Chapter One, I will introduce Babrius and discuss what is known of his life. I will contextualise the fable collection within the literary period known as the Second Sophistic and discuss the connection between Babrius' fables and the rhetorical tradition as well as the fable traditions of the East. In Chapter Two, I will examine the style of the fables. I will argue against unfavourable judgments of Babrius' style and demonstrate how Babrius makes effective use of stylistic devices, particularly direct speech and irony. I will then consider the relationship between the fables and the genre of satire, and I will argue that Babrius' claim to soften the tone of his fables does not necessarily equate to a diminution of the satirical force of the fables. Finally, I will consider the role of humour in the fables.

Part II engages in a detailed analysis of the fables in order to identify the key themes of the collection and the moral framework that underpins it. In Chapter Three, I will discuss conflict, suffering and survival as the key themes of the collection, and I will examine how and why Babrius' treatment of these themes differs from the *Augustana* collection and the fables of Phaedrus. In Chapter Four, I will argue that Babrius' moral and didactic objectives are of equal importance to his literary objectives. First, I will discuss the significance of Babrius' retelling of the myth of the golden race. Next, I will examine the full range of behaviours that are censured in the fables as well as those that are praised. I will conclude with a discussion of Babrius' moral scheme and the significance of Babrius' moral message for our understanding of popular morality in Babrius' time.

Part III seeks to demonstrate that Babrius' fables yield a number of important insights into social relationships and emotions and behaviour in this period. Chapter Five examines how the fables present various social and personal relationships. I will examine Babrius' views about religion, family and

friendship and consider to what extent these may be representative of more widely held views. Chapter Six examines the use of a number of emotion-terms in the collection and the manner in which the corresponding emotions are conceptualised and portrayed. This represents an entirely new avenue of inquiry and one that I hope will produce findings that will be of interest to classicists studying ancient emotion as well as scholars interested in this period more generally. Chapter Seven presents the overall conclusions of this study.

PART I

Babrius is not widely known as a poet of the first to second centuries CE. In Chapter One, I will introduce Babrius by examining what is known of his life and background. I will contextualise Babrius' work within the literary period known as the 'Second Sophistic' and discuss the important role that his fables played in rhetorical education. I will consider connections between Babrius' fable collection and the fable traditions of the East as well as the significance of Babrius' temporal and geographical location for the transmission of fables from the ancient to the modern world. In Chapter Two, I will examine the style of the fables, particularly Babrius' distinctive use of direct speech and irony, which constitutes the first detailed study of this subject. I will demonstrate how the stylistic devices that are employed by Babrius not only make his fables pleasurable and appealing as narratives but also increase their authenticity and hence, audience involvement. I will then consider the connection between the fables and the genres of satire and comedy. This latter discussion will highlight how Babrius uses irony, satire and comedy to create fable narratives that are both perceptive and entertaining.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING BABRIUS

Very little is known about Babrius, the mythiambic poet. Most of the information that we have about him has been inferred from what Babrius himself says, or appears to say, in his fable collection. While some reliable inferences have been drawn from the text, other suppositions are speculative and controversial. In the discussion that follows, I will outline the conclusions that are reliable and comment on those that are less so.

I. Who was Babrius?

It is generally agreed that Babrius' fables were written prior to 207 CE owing to the fact that two Babrian fables are quoted verbatim in the *Hermeneumata* of Pseudo-Dositheus from 207 CE.[1] Most probably, the work was written in the first to second centuries CE in the period known to scholars of Greek literature as the 'Second Sophistic'.[2] There are three reasons for dating the fable collection to this period. The first is the style and unusual choliambic metre in which the Babrian fables are written. In particular, there are said to be stylistic similarities to the work of Oppian of Cilicia (second century CE)[3] while the metre has been said to resemble the poetry of Martial (40–103 CE).[4] The second reason is the similarities between the language of the fables and the Greek of the New Testament and Septuagint.[5] The third reason is that the second prologue of the fable collection is addressed to 'the son of King Alexander' (ὦ παῖ βασιλέως

[1] B84 and B140 (see Perry 1965: xlvii). Getzlaff claims to see evidence of Pseudo-Dositheus' dependence on Babrius in five fables: see Getzlaff 1907. More recently, Holzberg has suggested that nine of the sixteen fables in the *Hermeneumata* are probably based on Babrius' fables (Holzberg 2002: 30).

[2] This is the view of Lachmann 1845: xii; Crusius 1896: 2658-59; Perry 1965: xlviii; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 103 and Morgan 2007: 326. Luzzatto states that Babrius' style and verse formation clearly places him within and no earlier than, the second century CE: see Luzzatto 2009. Holzberg gives a wider date range, saying that the work was produced "sometime between the end of the first and the beginning of the third century" (Holzberg 2002: 52). Rutherford hesitates to date the first book but claims that the second book was written in the early third century CE (Rutherford 1883: xi-xii).

[3] Luzzatto 1975: 44-49; also Luzzatto 1985.

[4] Lachmann 1845: xii.

[5] See Luzzatto 1975.

Ἀλεξάνδρου: line 1). Some scholars have interpreted this as a dedication to the son of a distant descendant of Herod who was appointed by Vespasian as king of Cilicia in the first or second centuries CE.[6]

Babrius' name is rare in Latin and even rarer in Greek and, for this reason, Luzzatto and La Penna maintain that the name may have been corrupted.[7] In spite of this, most scholars connect the name with an Italian heritage.[8] Further support for Babrius' Italian nationality can be found in the metre of the fable collection which is characterised by a form of iambic verse construction that has affinities with the Latin scazon and is not seen elsewhere in Greek iambic poetry.[9] In addition, various 'Latinisms' and curiosities of Greek have been identified throughout the collection, such as his use of ἐπέχειν and μή.[10] This has led to the conclusion that although Babrius must have known both Greek and Latin, his Greek is of a later date and is not of a pure Attic type.[11]

It is also quite probable that Babrius lived in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, probably in Syria or Asia Minor.[12] The stylistic similarities to the work

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[6] See J. *AJ*. 18.140. In this passage, Josephus says that King Alexander of Cilicia deserted the Jewish religion and adopted that of the Greeks. Unfortunately, Josephus is the only extant ancient source to mention this king. Scholars who identify the king referred to in the prologue as King Alexander of Cilicia include Perry 1965: xlviii; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 103; Holzberg 2002: 59 and Morgan 2007: 326. Rutherford's suggestion (which appears to be based on Crusius') that the second book is dedicated to Alexander Severus rather than King Alexander of Cilia does not appear to have been widely accepted: see Rutherford 1883: xii, xix-xx. A third possibility is that the dedication refers to Caracalla (see Neumann 1880). This possibility has recently been revived by Luzzatto (see Luzzatto 2009).

[7] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: VI-VII.

[8] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: VII, X; also see Rutherford 1883: xix; Wagner 1977: 1123; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 103; Morgan 2007: 329. Perry explored the possibility that the author's full Latin name was Valerius Babrius, inferring this from an excerpt from a fable manuscript known as the *Harleianus* 3521 (see Perry 1965: lii-liii). After considering the evidence, Perry concluded that this was a "dubious inference": see lii. Subsequent scholarship has confirmed this to be the case (Vaio 1980).

[9] See Crusius 1879: 165ff.

[10] E.g. B50.11 where ἐπέχειν is used in an absolute sense and without νοῦν; also the use of μή in, for example, B37.10. See Rutherford 1883: lxiv. For further discussion of this topic see Luzzatto 1975.

[11] Rutherford 1883: lviii-lxvi.

[12] On the subject of Babrius as a Syrian see Zimmerman 1933.

of Oppian of Cilicia and the usage of late forms of Greek both suggest an Eastern geographical location. In addition to this, Babrius is unusual among Greek authors in describing fables as the invention of the Syrians rather than crediting Aesop or some other source.[13] This statement suggests that he may have been closer to, or more inclined to, recognise the fable traditions of the East.[14] In one fable, Babrius claims to be well acquainted with the Arabs (B57.12) while various other fables in the collection demonstrate a familiarity with aspects of life in the East.[15] According to Luzzatto, Babrius' references to religion show no traces of Roman or Italian influence but are entirely Greek and this is also more consistent with the author living in the East than in Italy.[16] The fact that the work circulated in Syria and Egypt in the third century CE, as indicated by the *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae* and the various papyri, may also point to a nearby location for the poet.[17] Furthermore, if the dedication in the second prologue does refer to the King Alexander appointed by Vespasian to rule over Cilicia at this time, then it is very likely that Babrius lived in the Cilician region which, at the time, extended into Asia Minor and south to the borders of Syria.[18]

In addition to these inferences, it has been suggested that Babrius was attached to a royal court and that he acted as a royal tutor to Branchus, the son of King Alexander of Cilicia.[19] This suggestion is derived from the address to a child named Branchus in the first prologue (line 2) and in B74.15, as well as the

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[13] See Prologue II, lines 1-3.

[14] See Wagner 1977: 1123-4. Perry interprets this reference to the Syrians as the poet paying homage to King Alexander who was "surrounded by Syrians" (Perry 1965: xlix-l). This is not necessarily the case since it was common for the origin of fables to be connected to a particular region. For a discussion of the various geographical adjuncts used in connection with fables see van Dijk 1997: 105-109.

[15] Attis, a Phrygian deity associated with the myth of Cybele, is mentioned in B141.7 while Arabs are mentioned in B57.6, B57.12 and B8.1. Camels also feature in B8.1, B40.2 and B80.1.

[16] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: IX.

[17] See Morgan 2007: 61.

[18] See Millar 1993: 567.

[19] See Perry 1965: xlvii; Holzberg 2002: 52, 59-60 and Nøjgaard 1967: 191.

address to the son of King Alexander in the second prologue (line 1).[20] Much has been made of the use of the name 'Branchus' in the first prologue and in B74.15. As both Perry and Morgan note, the name is a curious one because it is not used by anyone other than Babrius.[21] The name does appear in Greek mythology, however, as Branchus was the name of the founder of the impressive temple of Apollo at Didyma which was famous for its oracle and was second only to the oracle located at Delphi. As a result, there has been speculation that the Branchus referred to by Babrius is in some way connected in name, family heritage, or geographical location to the Branchidae priests of Apollo at Didyma. In the late nineteenth century, Rutherford dismissed such suggestions as ludicrous saying:

> [i]t shows a heart-breaking want of common sense to base a theory, as some have done, on the name Branchus, and to excogitate some connection with the Βραγχίδαι priesthood of Asiatic Ionia. Names were by this time as much mixed as races, and a Roman emperor, himself an Ἀλέξανδρος, might surely name a son Βράγχος, when his predecessor had actually been called Heliogabalus.[22]

Following this line of reasoning, Luzzatto has recently reasserted the possibility that the child poetically referred to in the fable collection as Branchus could be Elagabalus, the proclaimed son of Caracalla.[23]

My own view is that the name 'Branchus' probably has little to do with a real historical figure, with myth, or with the priesthood at Didyma. The name may be a literary allusion to a fragmentary poem by Callimachus that was entitled *Branchus* and this is quite possible, given the metrical and other similarities between Babrius' fable collection and Callimachus' *Iambs*.[24] It could also be a literary flourish. After all, it would be appropriate to dedicate a poetic work to a figure who shares the name of a child who was especially beloved by Apollo, the god of poetic inspiration. A third possibility is that the child Branchus is a

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[20] A child (παῖ) is also addressed in two epimythia at B18.15 and B72.23. Vaio considers the former to be genuine while the latter is probably spurious (see Vaio 2001: 45, 109).

[21] Perry 1965: lvi; Morgan 2007: 330.

[22] Rutherford 1883: xx, footnote 2.

[23] See Luzzatto 2009.

[24] See Holzberg 2002: 52-3; Morgan 2007: 330.

convenient but entirely imaginary 'listener', a possibility that Perry has recognised.[25] Whatever the motive for the dedication may be, it does not definitively establish that Babrius was tutor to a young prince. In fact, the alleged evidence for Babrius' attachment to a royal court and his royal connections is very slight. For this reason, I think it is necessary to resist the temptation to characterise Babrius as a royal tutor. Such a characterisation can have an unfortunate impact on one's reading of the fables, especially if one interprets the fables, as Nøjgaard does, as advocating submission to power.[26] A preferable course is to accept that we do not know the significance of Babrius' dedication. By remaining free from any assumptions about Babrius' social status and role, we are more likely to be open to new and different interpretations of the text.

In sum, what is known of Babrius and his life is limited to the following. He wrote his collection of fables in the first to second centuries CE but prior to 207 CE. He was probably of Italian heritage. He had a knowledge of both Greek and Latin but he follows Latin metrical practices and does not write pure Attic Greek. He was educated, which can be seen in his familiarity with Homer,[27] for example, as well as the Greek poet Callimachus,[28] and Latin poets such as Martial.[29] It is likely that he lived in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, probably in Syria or Asia Minor.

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[25] See Perry 1965: lvi.

[26] Nøjgaard speaks of Babrius' artistic ambition as a member of the royal court and his status as a courtier (Nøjgaard 1967: 191, 353).

[27] Homeric allusions in Babrius are discussed in Rutherford 1883: lxi-lxiii and Holzberg 2002: 58. For an example see B68.4 in which Babrius describes Hermes shaking lots in the leather cap of Ares in order to determine who will shoot first in an archery contest. A similar description appears in Homer's *Iliad* at 7.175-185.

[28] Holzberg 2002: 52-3.

[29] See Rutherford 1883: xvii and Holzberg 2002: 58. Morgan raises the possibility that Babrius was even part of the same literary circle as Martial during a period of time possibly spent in Rome (see Morgan 2007: 329).

II. Babrius and the 'Second Sophistic'

The dating of the Babrian fable collection to the first to second centuries CE places Babrius in the middle of a period that is commonly referred to as the 'Second Sophistic'. In order to give some context to Babrius and his writing, the following discussion provides a brief outline of the geopolitical, social and cultural characteristics of this period. It then suggests how Babrius' writing may reflect aspects of the literature, culture and society of the time.

The phrase 'Second Sophistic' was coined by the ancient sophist and orator Philostratus (c. 170 – c. 247 CE).[30] Modern scholars have adopted the phrase, applying it to Greek literature that was produced in the period between the first and third centuries CE[31] but the use of this phrase has not escaped criticism. Goldhill suggests that it is an artificial label and that, among other things, it can be misleading. The phrase suggests, for example, that the writing of this period was homogeneous and that the writers of this period had a shared agenda.[32] Despite this unfortunate implication, Goldhill notes that the phrase is useful in that "it emphasizes the constant importance of rhetorical training and the rewards of rhetorical success in Empire society, and stresses the constant pull backwards to the glorious traditions of classical Greece, the so-called first Sophistic".[33]

In the past, the literature produced during this period was criticised, particularly by classicists of the eighteenth century.[34] These criticisms were, for

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[30] According to Philostratus, the second sophistic period was devoted to developing 'general outlines' (τὰς ὑποτυπώσεις) of different types of man while the first sophistic focussed on 'philosophical themes' (τὰ φιλοσοφούμενα) such as courage, justice and the nature of the heroes and gods (see Philostr. *VS* 481).

[31] Anderson 1993: 13.

[32] Goldhill 2001: 14.

[33] Goldhill 2001: 14.

[34] Gibbon claimed that in this period, the charms of the former poets "instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations." Gibbon 1776-1788: 51-52. Similar

the most part, founded on two claims: that literature from this period is not part of the canon and that it is inferior to the literature produced in the classical period.[35] As Anderson observes: "[i]t has always been easy to despise the Greek literature of the Empire in terms of its failures rather than its successes, and in particular to dismiss individual achievement and denigrate what is 'typical' ".[36] The literature is said to have been characterised by a desire to imitate and revive the intellectual and creative activity that existed in ancient Greece, a so-called 'cult of the past',[37] while the writers of the Second Sophistic period have been described as obsessed with the past.[38] Although it is possible to discern a strong tendency among various authors from this period to look back to ancient Greece, this tendency was not expressed in the same way, or to the same degree, by all the writers and poets of the time. In fact, these sorts of preconceptions of, and generalisations about, Second Sophistic writers had an unfortunate and negative impact on efforts to assess the creative output of the period.[39]

In the twentieth century, as well as more recently, there have been efforts to adopt a new and more positive approach to the literature of the period. As a result, there has been renewed interest in some works of literature, particularly the ancient novels.[40] As Goldhill has observed:

> [The Greek writings of the Roman Empire] have become increasingly viewed as central documents for understanding the pressures and tensions of a society in change – with the growth of Christianity, the development of Rabbinic Judaism, and the increasing claims of Greek *paideia* as a link between the educated of Empire from Gaul via Africa to Syria and Italy itself. The different needs of

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criticisms have been voiced by the twentieth-century scholars Yoder 1938: 281 and van Groningen 1965: 45-56.

[35] See Goldhill 2001: 17.

[36] Anderson 1993: 239.

[37] Sandy 1997: 49.

[38] Sandy 1997: 43.

[39] Boyle and Sullivan write that "the common devaluation of Roman literature produced after the deaths of the great Augustan writers is based largely on misapprehension and stock responses, often underpinned by myopic cultural arrogance" (Boyle and Sullivan 1991: xxi-xxii).

[40] For an excellent survey of changes in approach to the Greek novel and the reasons for these changes see Swain 1999: 12-35.

> different Greek writers to articulate their position in the Empire and within a Greek intellectual tradition — and others' responses to this varied Greekness — are significant elements in this heady cultural mix.[41]

This new approach has opened the way for a re-evaluation of the Babrian fable collection in its proper context and with a fresh perspective. Free from the negative connotations that the Second Sophistic period held for nineteenth-century classicists,[42] it is now possible to examine the Babrian fable collection in a more objective light. It is also possible to achieve a better understanding of the Babrian fables as a product of an important period in the history of literature. In the discussion that follows, I will outline some of the characteristics of the 'Second Sophistic' period and how these characteristics are reflected in the Babrian fable collection.

In 14 CE, the year of the first emperor Augustus' death, the Roman Empire extended from North Africa and Egypt in the far south to the Black Sea region and modern Belgium in the north.[43] In the east it extended into the region of Cappadocia and in the west it ended with Lusitania in modern Spain.[44] By 214 CE, the frontiers of the Empire had been extended into Britain, along the Rhine and the Danube, and further into the East, gaining Armenia and larger client kingdoms in Syria and Arabia.[45] Individual communities were aware of the vast geo-political extent of the Roman Empire as there was evidence of it in virtually every aspect of life, including trade, food, administration, leisure and travel.[46] Millar, for example, makes the observation that, by 200 CE, the Roman Empire was so vast, and yet sufficiently unified, that a traveller could journey from one far corner of the Empire to another with the need for only two languages (Greek

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[41] Goldhill 2001: 17.

[42] See, for example, Rutherford's comments on the supposed failures of Babrius (Rutherford 1883: xli).

[43] Millar et al. 1970: 108.

[44] Millar et al. 1970: 108.

[45] See map in Millar et al. 1970: 109.

[46] Augustus conducted 'universal' censuses, one of which took place in Syria in 6 CE, in an attempt to list all of the subject peoples of this vast empire (see Butcher 2003: 79).

and Latin) and without encountering much that was unfamiliar in terms of urban life.[47]

With such a sprawling empire to manage, it is natural that unification of the Empire was the critical objective for Rome:

> The main theme of this period is unification – political, social, cultural and religious. In the beginning, the provinces, large areas created by conquest and organized for administrative convenience, were ruled by governors, mainly senators, sent out from Rome and aided by a minute staff and by the presence, not everywhere, of Roman legions.[48]

In social and cultural terms, unification was achieved by means of spreading Graeco–Roman urbanization throughout the Empire.[49] In religious terms, the period witnessed the gradual infusion of Graeco–Roman paganism with Eastern cults.[50] The trend toward unification was also demonstrated by the growth of Roman citizenship. Initially, Roman citizenship established a clear divide between Roman citizens and 'others'.[51] Over time, illustrious men from the provinces gradually came to be accepted as Roman citizens and to assume equestrian and senatorial offices.[52] By the early third century CE, the Roman emperor Caracalla (211–217 CE) issued an edict that gave Roman citizenship to virtually all free people in the Empire.[53]

Although unification was the goal and Rome was the normal place of residence for the emperors throughout this period,[54] the depth of penetration of Roman political and cultural influence throughout the Empire varied. This was particularly the case in the Greek provinces in the east, including Asia Minor and Syria where Babrius supposedly lived and wrote. As Millar observes:

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[47] Millar et al. 1970: 9.

[48] Millar et al. 1970: 1-2. Also see Butcher 2003: 79-80.

[49] For a discussion of urbanization as the "instrument of Empire" see Butcher 2003: 106-108.

[50] Millar et al. 1970: 11. For a general account of religion in this period and region see Butcher 2003: 335-398. For an account of religion in Roman Syria in the second and third centuries see Sartre 2005: 297-342.

[51] Millar et al. 1970: 9.

[52] Anderson 1993: 5.

[53] Millar et al. 1970: 9.

[54] Millar et al. 1970: 4.

> For this whole area Rome created a political framework, but little more. The regions were divided into provinces under Roman governors, and the provincial system was steadily extended to take in the client-kingdoms which ruled much of eastern Asia Minor and the Syrian area in the first century ... Roman rule consciously favoured the creation in the cities of hereditary ruling classes, whose loyalty could be assured, and who could be held responsible for public order and the payment of taxes; the end of the first century also saw the beginning of a substantial influx of Greeks into the Roman Senate. Beyond that, however, Rome contributed only indirectly to the social and cultural history of the area.[55]

This suggests that the community in Asia Minor or Syria to which Babrius probably belonged would have had an awareness and knowledge of Rome but also a degree of independence and freedom, particularly in social, cultural and lifestyle matters.[56]

In the wider Empire, the period was notable for a so-called 'blossoming' of cities.[57] The cities themselves shared certain characteristics, such as theatres, baths, an agora, and amphitheatres.[58] The self-sufficient city was the ideal of the Roman government:

> The city was to maintain peace, order and prosperity for Rome and for itself, and to cover its expenses as well as paying taxes to Rome. Its citizens and its lands should provide for its upkeep: paying or providing labour for public works, covering salaries of teachers, rhetors, doctors and others on the public payroll, the costs of fuel and heating for the baths, of sending embassies to the provincial governor or emperor, of holding festivals and public banquets, and of maintaining and subsidizing the market, among other things.[59]

Studies of the likely populations of various cities throughout the region indicate that a significant proportion of the population lived within a dense urban setting.[60] The cities, particularly in Syria, competed for various titles and honours,[61] and communal life was financed both by benefactions and by public

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[55] Millar et al. 1970: 195-6. Also see Butcher 2003: 80-87.

[56] Some suggest that the East viewed Rome as largely irrelevant (Elsner 2001: 150).

[57] Sartre 2005: 151.

[58] Sartre 2005: 151.

[59] Butcher 2003: 225.

[60] Sartre 2005: 183. Cities were the hub of political, administrative, commercial and religious activity but there were also rural villages that engaged in agriculture, and pastoral nomads who herded flocks of goats and sheep throughout these regions (see Dijkstra 1995: 9). On the cities of the region and the recognition of civic status see Butcher 2003: 98-9.

[61] Butcher 2003: 237-40.

funds.[62] This, then, is the type of community and urban life with which Babrius would have been familiar.

This period of Roman history has been described as relatively prosperous in economic terms.[63] In this environment, literary and cultural pursuits flourished. Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* and *Life of Apollonius*, the writings of Plutarch, the Greek novels, Arrian's histories, the orations of Aelius Aristides, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, Pausanias' *Guide to Greece*, and Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses* all emerged in this period. One of the important features of the literature of this period is the way in which the authors interact with, and explore notions of the Greek past. As Swain writes: "[c]ulturally the period is distinct for its renaissance of Greek letters and for its emphasis on Hellenic culture and speech as the emblems of civilization."[64] Although Greek culture and language were viewed as the pinnacle of social achievement and civilization, the tendency to look back to the Greek past, as Goldhill points out, was a much more complex phenomenon than a straightforward 'obsession' for all things Greek.[65] Writers of this period do not interact with 'Greekness' in the same way. As we will observe in the following chapters, Babrius' fables demonstrate a complex and often subtle interaction with aspects of Greek mythology, literature and philosophy.

Babrius' probable location in the eastern regions of the Roman Empire makes his choice to write in Greek a natural one. In the East, knowledge of Greek was far more widespread than Latin,[66] although the use of Latin names was

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[62] Sartre 2005: 160.

[63] See Anderson 1993: 5.

[64] Swain 1996: 2.

[65] Goldhill 2001: 8.

[66] See Millar et al. 1970: 196; Sartre 2005: 276. This was especially the case in the cities. In rural areas and among the indigenous population of Syria, Greek was only superficially known: see Dijkstra 1995: 12.

common among the upper classes and reflected Roman citizenship.[67] Greek was the more common language, particularly in Western Syria.[68] But what standard of Greek was spoken and written? While the élite sought to maintain a pure form of the Attic Greek language and in turn to define themselves as culturally and politically superior,[69] the spread of Greek culture meant that the Greek language was also learnt and widely used by non-purists:

> Owing to the great diffusion of Greek culture and tradition in the Greek East, at Rome, and elsewhere, the Greek past as a model could not be exclusive to Greeks. Unlike Atticism, which was supported by a complex array of theories and regulations, Greek culture, especially at the basic level of ordinary spoken Greek, could be acquired without any great technical expertise and was available as a ready-made medium of communication and government and/or a sign of culture and learning to those who wanted it.[70]

Earlier, I mentioned that Babrius' vocabulary and syntax contains a number of irregularities which have been ascribed to a late form of Greek as well as an Eastern geographical location. There are also said to be traces of New Testament and Septuagint Greek in the fables.[71] Within the context of the Second Sophistic period, these characteristics can be viewed as a product of the interaction between cultures and languages that was characteristic of Babrius' time and location.

In addition to, and perhaps as a result of, the ongoing interaction between Roman and Greek culture throughout the Second Sophistic period, rhetoric held considerable prestige. Sandy even goes so far as to state that:

> [t]he institutionalized teaching of rhetoric that enjoyed the official support of the Roman government both in Rome itself and in the educational centres of the Greek East decisively shaped all literary and other intellectual activity of the second century.[72]

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[67] Millar et al. 1970: 196. According to Sartre, Latin was still the official language of the government and army in Syria at the time (see Sartre 2005: 275).
[68] Millar et al. 1970: 197.
[69] Swain 1996: 409.
[70] Swain 1996: 411.
[71] Luzzatto 1975.
[72] Sandy 1997: 49.

Rhetorical training was the core component in élite education during this period.[73] Preliminary exercises or *progymnasmata* practised in the schools of rhetoric by boys between the ages of twelve and fifteen involved,[74] among other things, learning the techniques of speech composition such as narration, description, refutation, praise and blame.[75] These exercises centred on reading classical texts and building skills necessary for declamation.[76]

The sophists represented the pinnacle of rhetorical attainment and practice during this period.[77] Sophists were professional speakers who were particularly skilled in the realms of epideictic, ornamental and display rhetoric. They led the more prestigious schools of rhetoric and they were also called upon to make speeches at important public and ceremonial events such as games, festivals and political occasions. Apart from being teachers, they also played an active role in local affairs and travelled as professional speakers and ambassadors throughout the Empire. In a cultural sense, they represented a highly educated, trained and cultivated élite. They had supposedly "read the approved canon of classical texts and absorbed from them the values of Hellenism and urban-dwelling man alike."[78]

There appears to have been a close interaction between this culture of rhetoric and Babrius' fable collection.[79] This is suggested by a chance discovery in Syria in the nineteenth century.[80] In 1881, the Leiden library was presented with seven tablets that had been acquired in Palmyra as souvenirs by an officer of the Royal Dutch Navy. These tablets contained, among other short text fragments, some fables directly extracted from Babrius' fable collection. Nine of

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[73] Swain 1996: 90.
[74] Kennedy 2003: x.
[75] Swain 1996: 90.
[76] Swain 1996: 90.
[77] Anderson 1993: 16.
[78] Anderson 1993: 8.
[79] Luzzatto 1984.
[80] See Hesseling 1892-1893.

these fables are in choliambics, the metre for which Babrius is renowned, and they include B97 (Lion and Bull); B117 (Man and Ants); B103 (Lion and Fox); and B107 (Lion and Mouse). The Greek text is said to be corrupt and full of errors and omissions and because of this it has been inferred that the tablets demonstrate a series of grammatical exercises for the teaching of Greek.[81] The *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae,* as they are called, have been dated to the third century CE and they strongly suggest that Babrius' fables were being used as exercises for the teaching of Greek in elementary schools in this period.[82]

In addition to the *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae,* we also have the *Hermeneumata* attributed to Pseudo-Dositheus and referred to by Holzberg as a 'Latin Primer' for Greeks.[83] This work is dated to the second or early third century CE.[84] Among the collection of assorted Latin texts that are contained within the *Hermeneumata* is a collection of sixteen fables in Greek with Latin translations. The fables are introduced by a prologue which emphasises the usefulness of the fable and states the author's intent to tell fables of Aesop.[85] While some connection between these texts and Babrius' fables is undisputed, opinions vary as to the nature and extent of that connection. Holzberg, for example, confidently attributes nine of the sixteen fables to Babrius while Rodríguez Adrados has concluded that the sixteen fables represent "a mixture of archaic, pre-Babrian elements, together with the true Babrian tradition".[86] For our purposes, the important point is that the inclusion of Babrius' fables in this work affirms the view that Babrius' fables were being utilised in rhetorical schools for the purposes of language teaching in the second and early third centuries CE.

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[81] Hesseling 1892-1893: 295.
[82] Hesseling 1892-1893: 296.
[83] Holzberg 2002: 30.
[84] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 221; Holzberg 2002: 30.
[85] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 117-118.
[86] Holzberg 2002: 30; Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 118-119.

In the fourth century CE also, it appears that Babrius' fables were being used by rhetoricians. Aphthonius presents a collection of forty short fables. According to Holzberg, Babrius was the source for at least twenty-four of these,[87] whereas Rodríguez Adrados concludes that although there is sometimes proximity between Aphthonius' fables and those of Babrius, Aphthonius depends primarily on versions in Hellenistic verse.[88]

In addition to this, it has been suggested that Quintilian may be referring to Babrius' fables when he advises that fables should be used for the purposes of rhetorical instruction.[89] This suggestion is based on the fact that Quintilian refers to exercises involving fables in verse and Babrius is the first and only known author of this time to have written fables in Greek verse. Quintilian gives the following advice to teachers of rhetoric:

> *Igitur Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supra modum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem stilo exigere condiscant. Versus primo solvere, mox mutatis verbis interpretari, tum paraphrasi audacius vertere, qua et breviare quaedam et exornare salvo modo poetae sensu permittitur. Quod opus, etiam consummatis professoribus difficile, qui commode tractaverit cuicumque discendo sufficiet.*[90]

Whether Quintilian is referring specifically to Babrius' verse collection in this passage is, I think, debatable but the excerpt is nonetheless interesting. First, it suggests that the ability to recite fables orally was a precursor to learning to write fables; second, it suggests that direct imitation of fable writers was actively encouraged, and third, it suggests that paraphrasing, embellishment and abbreviation, while still preserving the 'sense' of the fable, were viewed as exceedingly difficult and as the culmination of a lengthy educative process.

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[87] Holzberg 2002: 31.

[88] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 236-253 esp. 237.

[89] Perry 1965: l-lii.

[90] Quint. *Inst.* 1.9.1-3 [Let them learn to tell Aesop's fables, which follow on directly from their nurses' stories, in pure and unpretentious language; then let them achieve the same slender elegance in a written version. *Verse they should first break up,* then interpret in different words, then make a bolder paraphrase, in which they are allowed to abbreviate and embellish some parts, so long as the poet's meaning is preserved. This task is difficult even for fully trained teachers; any pupil who handles it well will be capable of learning anything (emphasis added)]. (trans. Russell 2001: 208-211).

Furthermore, Fernández Delgado has suggested that the Babrian fables may have been popular in schools because of their plausible characterisation, their clarity of language showing features of colloquial as well as literary language and their verse form which, he argues, was better suited to the paraphrasing exercises conducted in the rhetorical schools.[91]

Quintilian was not the only rhetorician to view fables as important for rhetorical training. In the first century CE, the rhetorician Theon discussed how teachers should employ fables for the purposes of rhetorical training and education[92]:

> καὶ τοῦτο τὸ γύμνασμα· καὶ γὰρ ἀπαγγέλλομεν τὸν μῦθον καὶ κλίνομεν καὶ συμπλέκομεν αὐτὸν διηγήματι, καὶ ἐπεκτείνομεν καὶ συστέλλομεν, ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐπιλέγειν αὐτῷ τινὰ λόγον, καὶ αὖ λόγου τινὸς προτεθέντος, μῦθον ἐοικότα αὐτῷ συμπλάσασθαι· ἔτι δὲ πρὸς τούτοις ἀνασκευάζομεν καὶ κατασκευάζομεν.[93]

Although such exercises have been viewed by some scholars as banal,[94] they formed an important basic training exercise for developing a higher level of skill and precision in the art of persuasion.

The second century rhetorician Hermogenes also discusses the use of fable in rhetorical training. Hermogenes describes fable as the first exercise to be assigned to the young and he indicates that it has the power to harmonise minds and to shape them while they are still 'tender' (ἁπαλός).[95] As in Theon's account of rhetorical training, Hermogenes discusses the techniques of expanding, as well as compressing, the narrative of a fable. Nicostratus, a

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[91] Fernández Delgado 2009; also see Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 128ff.

[92] Kennedy 2003: xii.

[93] Theon, *Prog.* 4.74 [As an exercise, *mythos* is treated in a variety of ways, for we state the fable and inflect its grammatical form and weave it into a narrative, and we expand it and compress it. It is possible also to add some explanation to it, or if this is prefixed, an appropriate fable can be adapted. In addition, we refute it and confirm it.] Translation from Kennedy 2003: 24. Greek text from G20c in VD 409.

[94] See Rutherford 1883: xl.

[95] G41 in VD 420.

contemporary of Hermogenes, is said to have compiled ten books of fables.[96] Some scholars have suggested that Babrius' fables are a verse translation of these ten books but there is no firm evidence to support this.[97]

In sum, it would appear that Babrius' fable collection may have had wide appeal in the Second Sophistic period. The younger generations of the local aristocracies were likely to encounter Babrius' fables as part of the *progymnasmata* assigned by their teachers in rhetorical schools; people in the broader community would have been exposed to fables through the oral tradition which was reinforced through oratorical display;[98] the community of poets and writers of the time would have been interested in fables because they were drawn to literary achievements that looked back to Greek traditions but also demonstrated innovation; and, finally, there were the sophists themselves, who used fables in their speeches to illustrate examples and to maintain a sense of élitism through reference to Hellenic culture and language.[99] It also seems likely that the use of Babrius' fables in rhetorical schools played a large role in the dissemination, and the ongoing survival, of Babrius' fable collection. In addition to the evidence of the wax tablet schoolbooks from Palmyra, Babrian fables have been found in papyrus fragments of the first two centuries CE.[100] Given that Babrius' fables had only recently been written, it appears that Morgan is right to infer that the reputation of Babrius' fable collection spread quickly and that rhetoric appears to have played a major role in the dissemination of Babrius' work.[101]

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[96] Hermog. *Id.* 2.12.3.

[97] See Rutherford 1883: xl.

[98] On the use of fables in lectures and orations by Aelius Aristeides, Dio of Prusa and Maximus of Tyre see Holzberg 2002: 26.

[99] There is evidence, for example, that sophistic writers of this period such as Dio Chrysostom, Lucian and Themistius cite Aesop's fables in their works. See D. Chr. 55.10 and 72.13; Lucianus, *Herm.* 84; Them. *Or.* 16.208A, 22.278C-79A.

[100] For details of these papyri see the previous chapter.

[101] Morgan 2007: 61, fn. 25.

Although Babrius' fable collection appears to have been used for the purposes of rhetorical training and *progymnasmata*, was this Babrius' original intention? On the one hand, such an intention would fit well with the practices of rhetorical schools of the period, and Babrius' own prologues suggest an atmosphere of instruction from an adult to a child.[102] On the other hand, Perry observes, and correctly in my view, that Babrius' fable collection strives to attain a status that is beyond that of a school textbook or rhetorical fable manual. As Perry says:

> Phaedrus and Babrius were the first writers to bring a disconnected series of Aesopic fables on to that avowedly artistic plane of literature, as an independent form of writing; but necessarily in verse, in order to sanction it as poetic composition. Only as such could it become, in theory, an independent form of literature in its own right, instead of a dictionary of metaphors.[103]

Thus, although we can be fairly certain that the Babrian fables were used in the Second Sophistic period for the purposes of rhetorical training we cannot assume that this was Babrius' intention. Like other writers of the Second Sophistic period, Babrius may have intended to create a work that would appeal to a large audience as well as smaller groups of readers who would have been able to access, and read, a written version.[104] In the same way as for other literature of the period, the appeal of the work may have depended on the combination of engaging narrative and poetic style.[105] Yet according to the first prologue, Babrius' primary intention was to impart knowledge to, as well as delight, the reader. This suggests that the rhetorical purposes to which the same fables were put were determined not by Babrius but by his contemporaries and those who followed.

In this period, writers were, as Bowie describes, "highly conscious of classical works".[106] They were educated in Greek thinking and writing and it is possible

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[102] See Prologue I, line 2.
[103] Perry 1965: xii.
[104] For a discussion of literacy in the period see Johnson and Parker 2009.
[105] See Boyle and Sullivan 1991: xvi.
[106] Bowie 1999: 44.

to see in their work "formal resemblances" to the works of esteemed Greek poets and writers such as Homer and Herodotus.[107] At the same time, there are distinctive features of the literature of this period that have been identified as more 'modern'. According to Holzberg, the writing of this period reflects a time of change and upheaval in terms of how man viewed himself and his place in the world. Holzberg describes this shift as a 'reorientation' of the private individual.[108] He says:

> After power had passed from Alexander's successors to the Romans and after the fall of the Roman Republic, with the consequent end to wars and pirate terrorism, life became on the one hand more peaceful, and the economic situation probably took a turn for the better in most cases. On the other hand, however, politics and government were now in the hands of men who, for Greek citizens, were truly alien. Individuals therefore had all the more reason to concentrate on their private lives and perhaps occasionally indulge in the kind of escapist literature which could transport them to a more attractive, fantasy world.[109]

In this passage, Holzberg is referring specifically to the emergence of the ancient novel, of which there are five main extant examples from the Second Sophistic period.[110] In subsequent chapters, I will argue that similar shifts in the conception of the individual are evident in the Babrian fable collection.

In terms of themes, there also appears to be some correlation between the ancient Greek novels and the Babrian fable collection. For example, commentators on the ancient novel have remarked that the novels typically express an 'escapist' and utopian outlook.[111] I argue that we can see a similar tendency in Babrius' fables, particularly in their use of mythology and in presenting a series of narratives that are intended to delight and amuse the listener and by transporting him/her to a time of unique and marvellous possibilities, namely, the possibility of full communication between gods,

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[107] See Bowie 1999: 44-45.

[108] Holzberg 1995: 31.

[109] Holzberg 1995: 31.

[110] These are the novels of Chariton (first century BCE or first century CE), the novels of Xenophon of Ephesus, Longus and Achilles Tatius (all from the second century CE) and Heliodorus (from the fourth century CE). See Swain 1999: 5.

[111] Holzberg 1995: 30-31.

animals, and nature. In the same way that the ancient novel delights in depicting far off lands and uses erotic motifs and adventures,[112] Babrius' fables incorporate stories of Arabs, erotic adventures and motifs. In the same way that Holzberg suggests that changes in the conception of the individual may have led to the creation of the ancient novel genre,[113] I shall demonstrate that Babrius' fables reflect similar changes in terms of how they portray the behaviour, thoughts, and emotions of the characters in the fables. Speeches, reflections and letters, for example, are said to be used in the Greek novels of the Second Sophistic period to give insights into characters' emotions.[114] In a similar way, Babrius uses direct speech to give insights into the emotional state of his characters. Authors of the Greek novels are also said to focus on conflicting emotions and psychological states.[115] In the chapters to follow, I will illustrate how Babrius' fable collection, more so than any other surviving collection, portrays the effects of conflict on the inner emotional state of his characters.

[112] Holzberg 1995: 10, 26.
[113] Holzberg 1995: 31.
[114] Holzberg 1995: 10.
[115] Fusillo 1999: 82.

III. Babrius and the Fable Traditions of the Near East

Babrius' location in the eastern region of the Roman Empire places him at a geographical crossroads between the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean. His familiarity with both regions and their respective fable traditions is indicated by the second prologue in his collection which recognises that fables originated in Syria but also draws a connection with Aesop:

> Μῦθος μέν, ὦ παῖ βασιλέως Ἀλεξάνδρου,
> Σύρων παλαιῶν ἐστιν εὕρεμ' ἀνθρώπων,
> οἳ πρίν ποτ' ἦσαν ἐπὶ Νίνου τε καὶ Βήλου.
> πρῶτος δέ, φασίν, εἶπε παισὶν Ἑλλήνων
> Αἴσωπος ὁ σοφός, εἶπε καὶ Λιβυστίνοις
> λόγους Κυβίσσης. ...] [116]

In this passage, Babrius describes fable as the invention of the 'Syrians', which is commonly taken to mean the Assyrians.[117] After this he mentions two Babylonian deities, Ninus and Belus.[118] While some have suggested that Babrius credits the Syrians with the origin of fables in order to pander to the king of the Cilician region,[119] it is also possible that Babrius simply recognised the Syrian origin of fable as historical fact. The existence of Assyrian and Babylonian fables has been confirmed by recent archaeological discoveries. These discoveries have overturned the notion that fables were "invented by the Greeks"[120] and that Aesop was the inventor of the fable genre. Following archaeological discoveries of cuneiform tablets that contain fables, Babrius' statement about the Eastern origin of the fable has proven to be correct and it is now recognised that fables originated in this region[121] and that they are derived from a literary

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[116] [Fable, son of king Alexander, is the discovery of the Syrian men of old, who were of the time of Ninus and Belus. The first, they say, who told fables to the sons of the Greeks was Aesop the wise, and Cybisses told fables to the Libyans.]

[117] See van Dijk 1997: 47.

[118] Belus is a hellenized form of the Babylonian god Bel also known as Marduk or Enlil. Ninus was the son of Belus, as well as the mythical founder of Nineveh and the Babylonian Empire.

[119] See Perry 1965: xlix-l.

[120] A quote from Handford 1956: xiv.

[121] At the same time, Rodríguez Adrados warns that we should not assume that all Greek fables are derived from Mesopotamian ones (see Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 292). Nor should we, according to West, exaggerate the influence of the oriental fable (see West 1984: 130).

tradition that is at least four and a half thousand years old.[122] Babrius' statement regarding Aesop is also consistent with what is known about the spread of the fable tradition throughout Greece and its association with the legendary figure of Aesop.[123] In relation to Babrius' claim about Libyan fables also, a number of other sources confirm that there was a Libyan fable tradition.[124] The second prologue in the fable collection therefore suggests that Babrius may have had an accurate awareness of, and openness to, the fables of the Near East. Babrius does not limit himself to crediting Aesop as the inventor of fables as Phaedrus does in the prologue to his first book (lines 1-2). This suggests that Babrius may have been more open to incorporating fables from different traditions into his collection and to preserving those that were drawn from Near Eastern origins. This opinion is further supported by certain characteristics that are shared between the Babrian fable collection and Mesopotamian fables. These will be examined below.

The Babrian fable collection is arranged alphabetically according to the first letter of each fable. This alphabetisation reflects the common practice in Sumerian proverb collections.[125] Accordingly, Nøjgaard suggests that the structure and organisation of the Babrian fable books may reflect a Mesopotamian tradition.[126] While it is impossible to prove this beyond doubt, there are a number of other shared characteristics that lend support to Nøjgaard's view. There are, for example, a number of fables in the Babrian fable collection that appear to have come directly from Mesopotamian sources. A compelling example is the Akkadian fable of the Gnat and the Elephant. This

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[122] I say 'at least' to take into account the suggestion that the Aesopic fable known as the 'Woodcutter and Hermes' may have originated from a prehistoric Neolithic proverb (see Cons 1924).

[123] See van Dijk 1997: 98-104.

[124] See van Dijk 1997: 106.

[125] Holzberg 2002: 53-54.

[126] Nøjgaard 1964: 511-513.

fable is preserved in the *Book of Ahikar* (c. 2500 BCE). The Akkadian version of the fable is as follows:

> When a gnat sat down on an elephant, saying, "Comrade, am I burdening you? I shall go away at the water-hole," the elephant replied to the gnat, "I did not know that you had sat down. What are you, all in all? I did not know that you got up."[127]

Babrius' version of the same fable appears in the collection as B84 (Gnat and Bull). The English translation of Babrius' version is as follows:

> A gnat stood upon the curved horn of a bull and holding back a little, said the following, making a humming noise: "If I burden you and make you bend a little, I'll go away and sit on that black river poplar". And the bull says, "It's of no concern to me whether you stay or go away. I didn't even notice your arrival".

The similarities between the two versions are remarkable given their respective dates. Yet, if Babrius encountered this fable through oral fable traditions of the Near East, then the similarity between the two versions is more easily explicable.[128] Furthermore, Perry maintains that in addition to this particular fable, there are two other fables in the Babrian fable collection that closely resemble Mesopotamian fables and that are not found in other Greek or Latin fable collections. These are B138 (a fable about a partridge that tries to save its life by becoming a traitor to its own kind) and B143 (a fable about a farmer who rescues a snake only to be fatally bitten).[129]

The Babrian collection shares other features with Mesopotamian fables, one of which is the fact that both contain 'dispute' fables. A number of dispute fables survive in Mesopotamian literature.[130] These fables are generally set in a mythological context. Two characters engage in a debate as to which of them is superior and a deity acts as judge. The debates take place between animals, plants, objects and natural phenomena.[131] There are at least a dozen examples of

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[127] Williams 1956a: 17.
[128] See Stol 1972.
[129] Perry 1965: lx.
[130] Williams 1956a: 5.
[131] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 304.

dispute fables that have been preserved.[132] In a similar way, the Babrian fable collection contains a number of dispute fables in which gods, men, animals, plants and objects engage in contests of wit, beauty or skill.[133] Like the Mesopotamian fables, the debate typically involves two characters and sometimes a deity as judge.[134] Furthermore, both the Mesopotamian and Babrian fables are characterized by an aggressive and competitive style of speech, and this is the case whether the fable involves animals or inanimate objects. For example, in the Mesopotamian fable of the dispute between the Tamarisk and the Date-Palm, the date-palm claims to be superior to the tamarisk[135] and threatens to split the tamarisk in two with its great strength.[136] B64 portrays a similar degree of aggression and rivalry. In this fable, a bramble bush listens to a fir tree praising its own merits and then threatens the fir tree by reminding it that the axes that cut fir trees are made from bramble wood. The competitive and adversarial style of speech in the dispute fables suggests that these fables may have been applied in rhetorical contexts. Indeed, there is evidence of fables being used in Mesopotamian culture for the purposes of rhetorical training and education.[137] Evidence of the instruction of children by means of fables can be seen in the Sumerian poem entitled the *Instructions of Šuruppak*, dated to around 2500 B.C.[138] As we have observed, the Babrian fables were also applied to rhetorical training and education.

Given the shared characteristics of the Mesopotamian fables and the Babrian fables as well as Babrius' geographical location in the Near East, it is important to consider Babrius' possible role in the transmission of fables from the Near East to the Mediterranean and elsewhere. It is also necessary to consider

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[132] See Lambert 1960: 153-4, 164; also Williams 1956a: 8-9.
[133] For further discussion see Chapter Three.
[134] E.g. B59 and B68.
[135] Lambert 1960: 159.
[136] Lambert 1960: 161.
[137] Lambert 1960: 189; also Falkowitz 1980: 4.
[138] West 1984: 109.

Babrius' role in the transmission of fables from the ancient world to the modern. To explore these questions further, we will examine the transmission of a single fable throughout the centuries and Babrius' role in this process.

In 1956, Williams published an article entitled 'The Literary History of a Mesopotamian Fable'.[139] This article traces the history of a single Mesopotamian fable through Egyptian and Classical literature to the Middle Ages. The fable in question is the fable of the eagle and the serpent from the Akkadian epic *Etana*, a work that dates to the Old Babylonian period (1800–1600 BC) and possibly earlier.[140] In this fable, an eagle swears an oath of friendship with a serpent and both raise their young near a tree. The eagle then breaks the oath of friendship and devours the serpent's young. The serpent appeals to Shamash to allow it to take revenge but the eagle begs for mercy. Shamash forgives the eagle and the eagle thereafter becomes a servant for Etana, the hero of the poem.[141]

As Williams explains, variations of this Mesopotamian fable appeared in Egypt in the Egyptian demotic text from the Ptolemaic period known as the Myth of the Sun's Eye.[142] In the Egyptian version of the fable, the eagle has been replaced with a vulture, the serpent with a cat, and the god Shamash with the Egyptian sun-god Re. Another important element of the story was also added at this time, namely, a description of the vulture bringing punishment upon itself after it has devoured its companion's young. The vulture steals some cooked meat from a Syrian and carries it into her nest. The meat has embers attached to it which results in the vulture's nest catching alight and her chicks being

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[139] Williams 1956b.

[140] Williams 1956b: 70. For a general discussion of this fable, its origins, and the Phaedran and Babrian versions see Trencsényi-Waldapfel 1959: 317-327.

[141] See Williams 1956b: 71-72.

[142] Williams 1956b: 72. For a more detailed discussion of Egyptian animal stories and fables see Brunner-Traut 1968.

destroyed. Some scholars suggest that this addition probably came from Western Asian traditions.[143]

By the seventh century BCE, Williams maintains that the fable reached Greece and appeared in a fragmentary poem by Archilochus.[144] The fable is used as the basis for Archilochus to attack Lycambes for breaking a marital arrangement. Archilochus is represented by a vixen, instead of the serpent in the Mesopotamian original, and Lycambes by an eagle.[145] The vixen is outraged by the behaviour of the eagle and it appeals to Zeus. Nemesis steps in on behalf of the vixen and destroys the eagle's nest and young. Williams maintains that the Greek version emphasises the moral dimension of the fable, an aspect that was not present in the original Mesopotamian version.[146] After Archilochus, the fable appears in the *Augustana* collection of Aesop's fables,[147] and it makes a brief appearance in Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds* produced in Athens in 414 BCE.[148] In the first century CE, the same fable is put into Latin verse by Phaedrus.[149] Although the original treaty of friendship between the animals has disappeared from Phaedrus' version, the basic elements of the fable are maintained.[150]

In the first to second centuries CE, a version of the fable was written by Babrius. Babrius translated the fable into Greek choliambic verse but only a prose paraphrase of this fable survives. It is as follows:

> A vixen made a treaty of friendship with an eagle. The latter had her nest on top of a tree, the former at its root. The eagle, having forsworn herself, <seized> the vixen's whelps..., and gave them as a meal to her chicks. On another

[143] See Franzow as cited in Williams 1956b: 72, fn. 12.
[144] Williams 1956b: 73.
[145] Holzberg suggests that Archilochus changed the serpent into a cunning fox because, in using the fable to represent his situation, he preferred to represent himself as an animal with greater capacity for retaliation (see Holzberg 2002: 14).
[146] Williams 1956b: 73.
[147] P1.
[148] Ar. *Av.* 651-653.
[149] See Ph. 1.28.
[150] Williams 1956b: 74-75.

> occasion, seizing a sacrifice from the altar, she put it, together with a live coal, into the nest, which <immediately> caught fire, and the chicks fell out. The vixen then turned the mishap into a hunt for game.[151]

We can see that this version preserves some earlier elements of the story that are absent from that of Phaedrus. The treaty of friendship is described, as well as the breaking of the oath, the story of the eagle carrying the embers into her own nest, and the death of both the eaglets and the fox's whelps. In this way, Babrius' version of the fable is closer to the older Egyptian and Western Asian traditions than the other Greek or Roman versions.

In the third century CE, the same fable is said to have inspired two separate stories in the Indian *Panchatantra*, although there are some significant differences between these two stories and the Mesopotamian original.[152] At this point, the story of the transmission of the Mesopotamian fable becomes even more complex and it is useful to consult Rodríguez Adrados' synopsis of the history of the Graeco–Latin fable.[153] Williams notes that the Mesopotamian fable next appeared in Syriac collections of the ninth and eleventh centuries CE which probably date originally to the fifth century.[154] Three Syriac versions of the fable are extant, one of which is from the collection of Syntipas and is very similar in content to Babrius' version.[155] According to Rodríguez Adrados, the Syriac translations led to Arabic translations in the sixth to ninth centuries CE and then to the Medieval fables.[156] It is not surprising then that the fable is also found in Armenian fable collections of the medieval period.[157] Again, there is a marked similarity between the Armenian and Babrian versions, suggesting that they

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[151] This is fable no. 186 from Crusius' 1897 edition as quoted in Williams 1956b: 75.

[152] See Williams 1956b: 75. In addition to this fable, however, there are a number of other fables that appear in both the Babrian collection and Indian literature, particularly B65 (Crane and Peacock), B32 (Man and Weasel) and B72 (Jackdaw). On these fables see Hertel 1908 and 1912. On B115 (Tortoise and Eagle) see Puntoni 1912.

[153] See Rodríguez Adrados 2000: Synopsis II.

[154] Williams 1956b: 75-76.

[155] Williams 1956b: 76.

[156] See Rodríguez Adrados 2000: Synopsis II.

[157] Williams 1956b: 76.

stemmed from the same tradition or that the latter directly influenced the former.

Importantly, Rodríguez Adrados' synopsis also indicates that Babrius' fables had a direct influence on the Byzantine fables, the Medieval fables, and the fables of Avianus which were popular throughout the Latin Middle Ages. As we have already noted, Avianus' collection of the fourth to fifth centuries CE was based directly upon Babrius' and it elevated the popularity of Babrius' fables in the West.[158] In the tenth century, Vaio explains that the Byzantine world was also familiar with the fables of Babrius. This is indicated by the *Codex Athous* and Codex 397 of the Morgan Library, both from the tenth century, as well as the citations of Babrius in the *Gnomologium* of Johannes Georgides and citations in the *Suda*.[159]

Williams finishes his account of the transmission of the Mesopotamian fable with a version of the fable that was written by Marie de France in the twelfth century, a version which is clearly based on Phaedrus'.[160] But Williams overlooks, or was perhaps unaware of, the other lines of transmission which indicate that Babrius had an important role in preserving the *earlier* version of the fable. If we follow the transmission of Babrius' fables through the Byzantine and Medieval eras, we find that it is the prose paraphrase of Babrius' version that appears in L'Estrange's English schoolbook edition of 1692.[161] In short, Babrius deserves credit for contributing to the preservation of the earlier version of the fable, a version that was subsequently adopted and translated by one of the most influential fable writers of the modern era.

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[158] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 119.
[159] Vaio 1984: 198-199.
[160] See Williams 1956b: 77.
[161] L'Estrange 1692: 72.

Because of his association with the East, it is possible that Babrius was more familiar with the Mesopotamian, Egyptian and/or Western Asian fable traditions than other ancient Greek or Roman fable collectors and writers. Yet, the significance of Babrius' geographical location at a cross roads between East and West and his role in the transmission of the fable has only been recognised by a few scholars.[162] As Falkowitz comments:

> Situated between two regions with well attested traditions and credited with high literate cultures long predating either one, the ancient Near East is often sought or decried as one possible source for Mediterranean and Indian fables. As a link in the transmission of Greco–Latin fables, Babrius, resident in Syria, provides a ready medium for such influences on the classical tradition.[163]

The transmission of the fable of the eagle and serpent from Akkadian epic to twentieth century fable collections is a remarkable story and one that suggests that Babrius' contribution to the fable tradition may have been more significant than has been previously supposed.

[162] E.g. Johnston 1912: 88; Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 722.
[163] Falkowitz 1984: 1.

CHAPTER TWO: STYLE AND GENRE

This chapter analyses the style and genre of Babrius' fable collection. First, I will set out and respond to criticisms of Babrius' style. I will argue that certain features of Babrius' style, such as his poetic descriptiveness and his use of direct speech, have an important role to play in making his fables particularly vivid and engaging. Next, I will examine Babrius' use of irony as a literary device. I will examine the forms of irony that are used, the purposes of irony, and the significance of Babrius' ironic view of the world. This is the only comprehensive examination of irony in studies of Babrius to date. I will then examine the connection between satire and the fables. I will argue that Babrius' claim to soften the satirical tone that was associated with the iambic metre cannot be taken at face value and I will demonstrate how Babrius' use of satire is related to both the Greek and Roman satiric genres. Finally, I will consider the role of humour in the fables. I will suggest that there is a high likelihood that Babrius' fables were intended to be humorous and I will explore the sorts of subjects in the fables that might have caused amusement.

I. The Style of the Fables

Scholars have examined the formal aspects of Babrius' style more than the literary impact of his stylistic choices. Luzzatto, for example, has examined Babrius' vocabulary[1] and his use of the choliambic metre;[2] Nøjgaard has examined his use of alliteration, figures of speech and word order;[3] Marenghi has applied phonetic and lexical analysis to the collection,[4] and Gasparov has compared Babrius' style with that of Phaedrus, concluding that there are significant stylistic differences between the two poets.[5] The conclusions offered

[1] Luzzatto 1975.
[2] Luzzatto and La Penna 1986: XCVIII-CX.
[3] Nøjgaard 1967: 335-343.
[4] Marenghi 1955.
[5] Gasparov 1966.

by the few scholars who have considered the literary merits of Babrius' style have, for the most part, been unfavourable. Although Nøjgaard recognises that Babrius has an original and profound sense of language,[6] for example, he adds that Babrius' use of language is often obscure and enigmatic.[7] Nøjgaard adds that Babrius' poetic and gentle tone tends to degenerate into sentimentality,[8] that many expressions are far-fetched,[9] and that he uses purely decorative and inappropriate poeticisms.[10] Nøjgaard concludes that Babrius' style is mannered and that this artificial quality is capable of undermining the narrative. He says:

> Il en résulte que le style babrien est celui *d'un narrateur précieux* dont l'art prestigieux risque en définitive de barrer le chemin au monde fictif, plutôt que d'y donner accès.[11]

Nøjgaard is not the only scholar to have criticised Babrius' style. Rutherford describes Babrius' fables as the "garbled paraphrases of an Italian versifier"[12] and Perry describes Babrius as a second-rate poet.[13] More recently Zafiropoulos has expressed a preference for the *Augustana* fables and notes that these fables are told in a different style to those of Babrius.[14] In doing so, he implies that the *Augustana* fables are purer, simpler, more didactic and less influenced by the social status of the author when compared to the fable collections of Babrius and Phaedrus. Of these, Zafiropoulos says:

> Their collections are the products of individual authors who feel the need to inform the reader about their use of sources, about their high position in fable tradition as skillful (sic) artists who turned the old brief and simple stories into delicate and highly-artistic poems.[15]

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[6] Nøjgaard 1967: 335.
[7] Nøjgaard 1967: 341.
[8] Nøjgaard 1967: 194.
[9] Nøjgaard 1967: 342.
[10] Nøjgaard 1967: 342-343.
[11] Nøjgaard 1967: 343. Nøjgaard may have been influenced by Crusius' negative judgment of Babrius' style, particularly Crusius' comment that the two prologues and the fables in the second book are "passably average" (see Crusius 1896: 2666).
[12] Rutherford 1883: xi.
[13] Perry 1959: 29.
[14] Zafiropoulos 2001: 5.
[15] Zafiropoulos 2001: 6.

Zafiropoulos believes that the Babrian and Phaedran fables lack the brevity and simplicity of the *Augustana* fables. This view is reminiscent of Rutherford's contrast between the 'purity' of the Athenian fables and the 'degeneracy' of later Roman versions such as Babrius'.[16] In the case of Rutherford, writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century, this attitude is understandable but, in scholarship today, there is good reason to adopt a less 'Victorian classicizing' approach.

A different picture emerges if we consider Babrius' literary merits in light of the literary standards of his own day and the uses to which his fables were put.[17] Luzzatto, for example, maintains that Babrius possessed a vast and impressive poetic vocabulary and that he was skilled in writing.[18] In addition to this, the fact that Babrius' fables were used to teach the Greek language and to train students in rhetoric suggests that the fables were regarded as having some stylistic merit and they were viewed by teachers and orators as examples of poetic style and composition.[19] The appearance of Babrius' fables in papyri soon after they were written also suggests that Babrius' presentation of the fables engaged his audiences, that is, they were viewed as having stylistic and literary merit.[20] Babrius' fables were also imitated by later fable authors such as Avianus.[21] These conclusions point to a more positive assessment of the style of Babrius' collection.[22]

Babrius appears to explain his own stylistic choices in the prologues to the two books in his fable collection. In the first prologue he says (at lines 14-19):

μαθὼν δ' ἄρ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχοντα καὶ γνοίης

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[16] See Rutherford 1883: xlviii.
[17] An approach that, oddly enough, Rutherford himself recommends (Rutherford 1883: l).
[18] Luzzatto 1975: 96.
[19] See the discussion of Babrius' fables and rhetorical education in Chapter One.
[20] On the apparent popularity of Babrius' collection see Morgan 2007: 61.
[21] Holzberg 2002: 62-70.
[22] Oldaker, for example, describes the style of Babrius' fables as showing a "studious cultivation of simplicity and clarity" (Oldaker 1934: 87).

ἐκ τοῦ σοφοῦ γέροντος ἡμιν Αἰσώπου
μύθους φράσαντος τῆς ἐλευθέρης μούσης·
ὧν νῦν ἕκαστον ἀνθίσας ἐμῇ μνήμῃ
μελισταγές σοι τνοῦ τὸτ κηρίον θήσω,
πικρῶν ἰάμβων σκληρὰ κῶλα θηλύνας.[23]

Babrius states that his fables have been stylishly adorned and represent sweet offerings for his audience. The softening of the iambic may, as Vaio points out, refer to the use of the choliambic metre more for poetic pleasure than for the purpose of invective which was often associated with choliambics.[24]

Interestingly, Babrius' first prologue bears some resemblance to the opening lines of book four of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. In this passage, Lucretius describes how he delights in plucking flowers from unknown fields and creating a crown for his head that will represent a unique gift from the Muses.[25] Lucretius then explains how physicians administer bitter medicine to children by coating the rim of a cup with honey. Like these physicians, Lucretius claims that he will present his harsh doctrines along with the Muse's delicious honey so that his verses may delight his audience while he imparts his teaching.[26] Babrius too claims to deck his dedications with flowers and to offer a sweet honeycomb to his audience. This 'sweetening' is necessary so that the unpalatable morals of the fables are absorbed. Like honey, the fables promise to be delightful as well as beneficial to those who imbibe them. Babrius' fables are described as 'dripping' with honey which suggests that the riches and benefits to be drawn from his fables are bountiful. In this way, Babrius' first prologue may be a veiled but clever reference to the first century BCE work of the Epicurean poet Lucretius.

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[23] [Having learned that this was so, may you also come to know it from the wise old man, Aesop, who told us fables from his boundless Muse. If you place each of these flower-adorned fables before my Muse, I shall lay down for you ... a comb dripping with honey, having softened the harsh clauses of bitter iambics.] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 1-15. For a discussion of the translation see the same in Vaio.

[24] Vaio 2001: 15. Similar interpretations are adopted by Perry 1965: 4-5fn. a; Holzberg 2002: 53; and Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 103.

[25] Lucr. 4.2-5.

[26] Lucr. 4.10-25.

Babrius also discusses the style of his fables in the second prologue:

...] ἀλλ' ἐγὼ νέῃ μούσῃ
δίδωμι καθαρῷ χρυσίῳ χαλινώσας
τὸν μυθίαμβον ὥσπερ ἵππον ὁπλίτην.
ὑπ' ἐμοῦ δὲ πρώτου τῆς θύρης ἀνοιχθείσης
εἰσῆλθον ἄλλοι, καὶ σοφωτέρης μούσης
γρίφοις ὁμοίας ἐκφέρουσι ποιήσεις,
μαθόντες οὐδὲν πλεῖον ἢ με γινώσκειν.
ἐγὼ δὲ λευκῇ μυθιάζομαι ῥήσει,
καὶ τῶν ἰάμβων τοὺς ὀδόντας οὐ θήγω,
ἀλλ' εὖ πυρώσας, εὖ δὲ κέντρα πρηύνας,
ἐκ δευτέρου σοι τήνδε βίβλον ἀείδω.[27]

The poet claims here to be the first to write fables in a new choliambic style.[28] He expresses a concern about imitation which is not evident in the first prologue. Keen to distinguish himself from other fable writers who have allegedly imitated his work, he defends his own style as superior. This claim to superiority rests on matters of style as well as content. He claims to understand the significance of the genre better than his imitators; to tell his fables in a clearer and more brilliant style; to avoid the harsh tone that was normally associated with choliambic poetry, and to have engaged in a careful process of strengthening and shaping his fables. He also introduces the metaphor of the warhorse bridled in gold to represent the beauty and impressiveness of the fable as well as its ability to introduce new information by breaking through intellectual defences.[29]

As discussed above, the Babrian fables are written in choliambic metre, a fact that the poet alludes to in the prologues to his first and second books. The term

[27] [But I am offering to a new muse, having bridled my fables with pure gold like a warhorse. When the door was opened by me first, others entered and they are carrying off creations resembling the riddles of a cleverer muse, having learnt nothing more than to recognise me. However, I recount my fables with brilliant speech and I do not sharpen the teeth of my iambs, but having fired them well and having softened the barbs well, I sing this book as a second instalment for you.]

[28] See Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 104.

[29] This metaphor was discussed above in the Introduction.

choliambic is derived from the Greek χωλός meaning 'lame' or 'limping'[30] and it is so named because this particular metre has a halting rhythm.[31] This metre is associated primarily with the sixth century BCE poet Hipponax who used poetry for the purposes of invective.[32] In the Hellenistic age, the same metre was used by the third century BCE poet Callimachus to tell two fables in his *Iambi*.[33]

Why did Babrius, a poet of the first or second centuries CE, choose to write his fables in choliambic metre? Holzberg suggests that Babrius is consciously imitating his Greek poetic predecessors, particularly Callimachus,[34] and this is a persuasive suggestion. There are hints of Callimachus not only in Babrius' choice of metre but in his account of the golden race in the first prologue and his writing of epigrammatic fables.[35] This imitative tendency is also consistent with the artistic and literary aspirations that defined the period. As we observed earlier, Babrius lived in a period that held classical Greek culture in high esteem. By selecting a metre that was used by ancient Greek poets of the sixth century BCE onward, Babrius may have been making a deliberate connection with Greek poets of a past era, a connection that his contemporaries were likely to have recognized and responded to in a favourable way.

Apart from connecting with the Greek past, there are other reasons why Babrius may have chosen this metre. Van Dijk maintains that Callimachus' iambs function as literary satires that deride rival poets.[36] By writing his fables in choliambic metre, Babrius may have wanted to evoke Callimachus and infuse his fables with a similarly satirical tone. The second prologue, for example, indicates that Babrius had various imitators and wanted to dispel any

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[30] See entry for χωλός in LSJ.
[31] West 1987: 30.
[32] Harrison 2005b: 190.
[33] Van Dijk 1997: 230-250.
[34] Holzberg 2002: 52.
[35] Holzberg 2002: 52, 58.
[36] Van Dijk 1997: 257.

doubts that he was the first to write fables in this style. This concern suggests that Babrius was part of an imitative literary climate and if this was the case, one can imagine that Babrius might wish to invoke satire and irony as potential weapons against his rivals. A further reason why Babrius may be consciously imitating the choliambic metre of Callimachus is that Callimachus was an innovator, a title that Babrius also claims for himself in his second prologue (line 9). Callimachus was the first to write lyric odes in elegiacs and iambics[37] while Babrius' scazon is unique among works of Greek iambic poetry.[38]

We turn now to the key stylistic features of the fables themselves. Scholars have observed that Babrius tends to write lengthier, more poetic and more descriptive versions of fables.[39] Rodríguez Adrados, for example, comments that Babrius is notable because he delights in detailed descriptions of the situation, action, and protagonists:

> Babrius loves presenting the beauty competition of the birds, the fights of weasels and mice, giving, in direct style and with certain expansions, the debates of the woodcutter and the fox, the wolf and the dog, the lion and the ass.[40]

Rodríguez Adrados ascribes this to Babrius' notion of the fable as a narrative and dramatic genre,[41] seeing him as, above all else, a writer who delights in being descriptive.[42]

It is true that Babrius' fables are generally more descriptive and more poetic, particularly when compared to the fables in the *Augustana* collection.[43] Babrian fables incorporate poetic descriptions of snowy landscapes (B45.1-3), poplar forests (B50.4), and mountain springs (B72.5-6), when the corresponding fables

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[37] Cameron 1992.
[38] Perry 1965: liii-liv.
[39] Holzberg 2002: 55-57; Perry 1965: xxiv-xxv; Nøjgaard 1967: 344-347; Zafiropoulos 2001: 6.
[40] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 188.
[41] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 191.
[42] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 218.
[43] This is not always the case. Fables in which there is little difference between Babrius' version and the *Augustana* are B86 and P24; B18 and P46; B43 and P74; B123 and P87; B59 and P100; B103 and P142; B97 and P143; B107 and P150; B89 and P155; and B31 and P165.

in the *Augustana* collection have none.[44] Babrian fables also delight in adding details about situations, characters and activities.[45] But are the reasons for these additional details as Rodríguez Adrados suggests? Are these descriptions merely for the delight and amusement of the poet and his audience, adding nothing to the content of the actual fables?

In the case of short fables that incorporate poetic descriptions, it is quite likely that Babrius has added certain details in order to fulfil the metrical requirements for each line. But what of the longer fables, when the lengthy descriptions and added details are not necessary to fill out the metre?[46] In fact, as will be shown, Babrius is selective in his use of detail and the details that are added are always relevant to the narrative. His lengthier descriptions also have an important role to play. I shall argue that Babrius' stylistic choices are more sophisticated than have previously been supposed.

To appreciate this, we will examine two fables that Holzberg uses to demonstrate Babrius' tendency to turn fables into "skilfully embellished short stories": B129 and P91.[47] The *Augustana* version describes a man who owns a dog and an ass. The ass grows jealous of the man's fondness for the dog. The ass runs up to the man and, in the midst of leaping about, kicks him (ὁ δὲ ὄνος φθονήσας προσέδραμε καὶ σκιρτῶν ἐλάκτισεν αὐτόν: P91.3-4). The Babrian version presents a much more detailed account of the same incident at B129.10-18:

> δηχθεὶς δὲ θυμῷ καὶ περισσὸν οἰμώξας,
> σκύμνον θεωρῶν ἁβρότητι σὺν πάσῃ,
> φάτνης ὀνείης δεσμὰ καὶ κάλους ῥήξας
> ἐς μέσσον αὐλῆς ἦλθ' ἄμετρα λακτίζων.
> σαίνων δ' ὁποῖα καὶ θέλων περισκαίρειν,

[44] Compare P6, P22 and P101.

[45] Compare, for example, P18.1 and B6.1-4 in which Babrius describes in much greater detail a fisherman's method of fishing with a horse-hair line; and P47.1 and B34.1-3 in which Babrius describes in detail the preparations for a festival of Demeter.

[46] Nøjgaard calls these longer fables 'epic fables' (Nøjgaard 1967: 316-328).

[47] Holzberg 2002: 55-57.

τὴν μὲν τράπεζαν ἔθλασ' ἐς μέσον βάλλων, 15
ἅπαντα δ' εὐθὺς ἠλόησε τὰ σκεύη·
δειπνοῦντα δ' ἰθὺς ἦλθε δεσπότην κύσσων
νώτοις ἐπεμβάς·...] [48]

The Babrian version, because it is more detailed, provides more material for the imagination. This is because audiences create visual and spatial representations of scenes, people and objects as they interpret a narrative. For this reason, it is helpful for an audience to be able to imagine the appearance and arrangement of places and objects.[49] In the fable, the detailed description of the house helps the audience to imagine the spatial relationship between the manger, the courtyard of the house, the furniture, and the man who is seated and eating his dinner. The *Augustana* version gives no indication as to where the action takes place or the location of the characters, and as a result, the audience has less information with which to imagine and construct a mental picture.

Details about a protagonist's motivations for action add depth to characterisation, giving the audience insights into a protagonist's internal state.[50] In the Babrian version, the contrast between the description of the ass toiling and feeling hurt and then trying to entertain and kiss its master, helps the audience to understand the ass's dissatisfaction and desire for attention and affection. The *Augustana* version, in contrast, does not display as much interest in the internal world of the protagonist. The ass is simply described as jealous (φθονήσας: P91.3). The Babrian version is more sympathetic to the protagonist and by means of added detail and description encourages a better understanding of the internal world of the central character.

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[48] [Stung in the heart and braying more than usual, on seeing the puppy in total luxury, he broke the bonds and ropes of his donkey-manger and went into the middle of the courtyard, kicking up his heels constantly. Fawning and wanting to skip about like the puppy, he smashed the table, striking it in the middle, and immediately broke all of the furniture. Straightaway he went to his master who was eating dinner and kissed him, pounding on his back.]

[49] Clark and van Der Wege 2001: 773-774.

[50] Clark and van Der Wege 2001: 776-780.

Added detail can also enable a more informed assessment of the events and the meaning of the fable. For example, the Babrian version describes the consequences of the ass's actions in some detail: the ropes are snapped, the furniture is smashed, and the master is trampled. Babrius then describes how the servants notice that their master is in danger, run to save him, and start beating the ass with spears and clubs. The fable ends with the ass lamenting its fate and questioning its own behaviour. For the audience, there is an uninterrupted line of cause and effect between the action, the consequences and the outcome and there is adequate information to support each event. In the *Augustana* version, the audience is told that the master was angry and ordered the ass to be beaten. The audience is unable to assess the extent of the man's injury, whether his anger was justified, and how the ass responded to the punishment.

There is another feature of Babrius' version that is important. At the end of B129, the ass says:

> "ἔτλην" ἔλεξεν "οἷα χρή με, δυσδαίμων·
> τί γὰρ παρ' οὐρήεσσιν οὐκ ἐπωλεύμην,
> βαιῷ δ' ὁ μέλεος κυνιδίῳ παρισούμην;"[51]

This is an example of an effective use of direct speech.[52] The *Augustana* version of the same fable does not incorporate as much direct speech.[53] In fact, the *Augustana* versions of fables often contain direct speech only in the closing lines of the fable, whereas Babrian versions present all of the speech in the fable as direct speech.[54] There are only two fables in the *Augustana* collection that have more direct speech than the corresponding Babrian versions. These are P49 (in which the *Augustana* version has direct speech and B23 has indirect speech) and

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[51] [He said "I suffered what is necessary for me, unlucky fellow. Why didn't I get sold along with the mules, instead of vying, wretch that I am, with a little dog?"]

[52] See Leech and Short 1981: 318.

[53] Other examples are B68 and P104; B36 and P70; B72 and P101; B115 and P230.

[54] This can be observed in B77 and P124; B7 and P181; B122 and P187; B6 and P18; B50 and P22; B107 and P150; B131 and P169; B13 and P194.

P62 (in which B39 has no direct or indirect speech and the *Augustana* version has only direct speech).

In order to demonstrate the significance of this stylistic difference further, let us compare B77 and the *Augustana* version of the same fable (P124). The *Augustana* fable describes how a fox, wishing to persuade a crow to drop a piece of cheese, praises the crow for its size and beauty (P124.1-4):

> ἀλώπηξ δὲ θεασαμένη αὐτὸν καὶ βουλομένη τοῦ κρέως περιγενέσθαι στᾶσα ἐπῄνει αὐτὸν ὡς εὐμεγέθη τε καὶ καλόν, λέγουσα καὶ ὡς πρέπει αὐτῷ μάλιστα τῶν ὀρνέων βασιλεύειν, καὶ τοῦτο πάντως ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ φωνὴν εἶχεν.[55]

Babrius presents this information in the form of direct speech (B77.4-7):

> "κόραξ, καλαί σοι πτέρυγες, ὀξέη γλήνη,
> θεητός αὐχήν· στέρνον αἰετοῦ φαίνεις,
> ὄνυξι πάντων θηρίων κατισχύεις.
> ὁ τοῖος ὄρνις κωφός ἐσσι κοὐ κρώζεις."[56]

Both fables end in the same way. The crow is so eager to show the fox that it has a voice that it opens its beak to sing and it immediately drops the cheese. Both fables end with the fox taking the cheese and ridiculing the crow. Yet, I argue that Babrius' use of direct speech results in a more vivid and engaging narrative. The reason for this is that direct speech decreases the distance between the narrator, the reader, and the character and their actions[57] whereas indirect speech causes a reader to feel a greater sense of "*distance* and detachment from characters and their words."[58] Narrativized discourse, on the other hand, that is, discourse which does not present the character's actual words directly or indirectly, creates an even greater sense of distance.[59] Babrius uses direct speech frequently and this suggests that he wants to create a sense of

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[55] [A fox caught sight of him and, wishing to get meat, stood there and began to praise him for his size and beauty, telling him that of all the birds it was most appropriate for him to be king and that this would certainly be so if he but had the voice.]

[56] ["Crow, what beautiful wings you have, a sharp eye, a neck that has to be seen to be believed. You display the chest of an eagle, and with your claws you prevail over all wild beasts. Such a bird, yet you are mute, and do not cry out."]

[57] Prince 1982: 48.

[58] Toolan 1988: 121.

[59] Prince 1982: 47-48.

closeness between himself, his characters and his audience and a sense that the audience is present at the actual event unfolding. The narrator of the *Augustana* fables, on the other hand, prefers to remain detached, and so the audience is also detached.

The sense of proximity that is encouraged by the use of direct speech is an important feature of the Babrian fable. One of the effects is that the impression of character in the Babrian fables is more vivid and real, because the audience feels that they are able to hear the character's actual words. The audience can 'tap into' the expressive force of a character's words in a way that indirect speech does not permit.[60] This occurs, for example, at the end of B129 when the audience hears the 'actual' words spoken by the ass when it laments its fate. The ass refers to itself as an 'unlucky fellow' (δυσδαίμων: line 23). It recognises that its suffering is deserved when it says "I suffered what is necessary for me" (" ἔτλην ... οἷα χρή με": line 23) and it also questions its own behaviour ("τί γὰρ παρ' οὐρήεσσιν οὐκ ἐπωλεύμην...;": line 24).

Another effect created by the representation of direct speech is that the narrator appears to interfere less in the story. In the words of Toolan, this allows the audience to "enter an environment where characters are in control and speak for themselves, while in indirect speech the narrator is more overtly still in control, and reports *on behalf of* the characters."[61] It is true that this is only an impression that is created by the poet. In fact, Babrius is exercising just as much creativity in writing a character's 'actual' speech as in writing the words that a character purportedly said. Nonetheless, the impression created on an audience encountering direct speech is that this is a reliable and authentic expression of character.[62] This effect can be observed in B77. By presenting the actual words spoken by the fox to the crow, Babrius enables his fox to convey its cunning and

[60] Beck 2001: 73.
[61] Toolan 1988: 121.
[62] Beck 2001: 54; Toolan 1988: 122.

persuasiveness directly to the audience. As a result, the audience is more readily convinced that the impression of cunning is accurate, believing that they have surmised it from the character's own words.[63] In the *Augustana* version, in contrast, the audience has to rely entirely on the narrator's presentation of the characters and as a result, the impression of the character of the fox is less vivid.

In sum, then, Babrius' use of detail and description serves a number of important purposes. The lengthier and more detailed descriptions in Babrius' fables help the audience to visualise the spatial environment, to gain insights into the internal world of the characters and to gain a better understanding of the events and their meaning. Babrius' use of direct speech increases audience involvement in the story by enabling an audience to evaluate and interpret the words of the characters for themselves. The narrator also appears to interfere less in the story, which means that there is immediacy in both the presentation and the impression gained of character. The end result is a fable collection that is not only poetic and descriptive, but vivid and engaging.

[63] This technique also enables Babrius to make full use of dramatic irony, a literary device which will be discussed in detail below.

II. The Use of Irony

Nøjgaard states that Babrius is the only fabulist to use irony frequently and that he gives it an essential function in the establishment of his system of values.[64] Yet Nøjgaard discusses irony only briefly and he focuses only on Babrius' use of irony to assign a negative value to an object or character.[65] He does not discuss Babrius' use of irony as a literary device. In the discussion that follows, I will adopt a different approach by applying recent theories of irony to Babrius' fables. I will discuss the way in which Babrius uses irony as a literary device and consider his role as an ironic observer of his world.

Irony is a difficult phenomenon to define.[66] For this reason, some have abandoned simple definitions in favour of identifying the basic features that are common to all forms of irony. They are said to be: a) a contrast between appearance and reality; b) a lack of awareness that the appearance is only an appearance (this lack of awareness is feigned by the ironist but real in the case of the victim of irony); c) the comic effect of this lack of awareness of the contrast between appearance and reality; d) an element of detachment, and e) a certain aesthetic quality.[67]

Irony also assumes a number of different forms. Verbal irony occurs when a speaker says something that is the opposite of what is meant.[68] The ironist makes the verbal statement in order to have it rejected as "false, *mal à propos*, one-sided".[69] Situational irony occurs when a situation is contradictory: for example, the irony of the suitors saying in Odysseus' presence that he will

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[64] Nøjgaard 1967: 291.

[65] Nøjgaard 1967: 289-298.

[66] Muecke 1970: 8. Nøjgaard's definition of irony is the "simultaneous awareness of both an apparent and real 'I' in the presence of a person who is unaware" (Nøjgaard 1967: 290). This definition does not appear to encompass situational irony which will be discussed below.

[67] Muecke 1970: 35, 45.

[68] Gibbs and Colston 2007: 4.

[69] Muecke 1982: 56. For further discussion of verbal irony see Wilson and Sperber 1992: 53-76; Giora, Fein and Schwartz 1998; also Worcester 1960: 77-90.

never return home.[70] In situational irony, a character is "serenely unaware that the situation could be other than he thinks it is, while all the time it is the opposite of what he assumes".[71] Dramatic irony occurs when the audience already knows what the victim is yet to find out, for example, an audience watching Oedipus and knowing before he does that he unwittingly killed his own father.[72]

An example of situational irony from Babrius' fable collection can be seen in B11. Here, a man traps a fox that has been stalking around his property. To punish the fox, the man sets fire to its tail and releases it. The fox runs straight into the man's grain fields and burns all of his crops. The irony is that in punishing the fox, the man inadvertently causes far greater harm to himself. A further example is B143. A farmer takes pity on a snake that is suffering from the cold by picking it up and warming it against his skin. As soon as the snake revives, it bites the farmer and kills him. Similar 'ironies of events', in which a character tries to accomplish something but undermines his/her situation, are apparent in other fables.[73]

Dramatic irony is used to great effect in B95. In this fable, a fox agrees to help lure a stag into a lion's den so that the lion might have a meal (lines 4 –11). The audience then observes the fox deceive the helpless stag by telling it that it must visit the lion in its den in order to be crowned king (lines 14 –35). The suspense heightens when the stag enters the lair and there is a sense of relief when the stag narrowly escapes being killed (lines 37–42). The suspense builds again when the fox is sent to try and deceive the stag a second time. Again, there is dramatic irony as the fox tells the stag that the lion did not intend to kill it and berates the stag for running away (lines 67–86). The audience is aware that the

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[70] See Muecke 1970: 167.

[71] Muecke 1970: 13. For a more detailed discussion of situational irony see Lucariello 2007.

[72] On dramatic irony see Booth 1974: 63ff; Worcester 1960: 111-122.

[73] See B7, B45, B46, B73, B79, B123, B131 and B136.

fox is trying to deceive the stag and the discrepancy between the knowledge of the audience and the antagonist creates further dramatic irony. Ultimately, the stag is persuaded to enter the lion's den again, only to be killed and eaten by the lion and the fox (lines 87–95).

Verbal irony is less common in the collection but it is nonetheless present. In B105, for example, a wolf steals a sheep from a flock and carries it away. A lion then appears and takes the sheep from the wolf. The wolf calls out to the lion, accusing it of being an unjust robber. The lion replies: "What! Did you come by it honestly, as a gift from friends?" ("σοὶ γὰρ δικαίως ὑπὸ φίλων ἐδωρήθη;": line 6).[74] A second example is B140. A cicada is dying of starvation in winter and approaches an ant to ask for some food from the ant's stockpile. The ant asks the cicada what is was doing during summer. The cicada explains that it was busy singing. The ant laughs, shuts away its food and says: "Dance in winter if you sing in summer" ("χειμῶνος ὀρχοῦ ... εἰ θέρους ᾄδεις": line 8).

In each of these examples, irony claims a victim. In B11 and B143, the victims are the farmer and the man. In B95, it is the gullible deer and in B140, it is the starving grasshopper. They are victims because they fail to foresee or recognise something that is crucial to their predicament. The types of victims in the fables vary widely from gods and humans to animals or even inanimate objects.[75] Some have substantial status and power while others are relatively insignificant.[76] Although there are numerous types of victims, the primary victim of Babrius' irony is always man himself since even the animal characters that are victimised in the fables are metaphors for different types of man. Yet it is not accurate to say that the victim is man *per se*. Rather, there is one

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[74] Textual amendment and translation from Vaio 2001: 146.

[75] For examples of ironic fables involving gods and heroes see B30, B63, B119 and B142; for examples involving inanimate objects see B36, B38 and B142.

[76] Irony is used as a weapon against characters of all types in the fables, from the kingly lion in B1 to the humble crab in B109 and the grasshopper in B140.

characteristic of man that is the key to the irony, namely, man's lack of awareness.[77] It is man's failure to recognise that things are not what they seem that makes him the target of irony. Furthermore, if the audience fails to recognise and comprehend the irony of the fable, then they too fall into the same 'unseeing' group and become, in turn, targets of the ironist.

Traits, situations and predicaments that Babrius treats ironically include behavioural excesses, such as boastfulness,[78] vanity,[79] and a lack of thought, foresight and consideration;[80] man's tendency to want more from life and to think that he can improve his lot;[81] various stages of life such as old age[82] and motherhood;[83] positive qualities such as strength[84] and hospitality;[85] negative qualities such as cowardice[86] and misjudgement;[87] man's tendency to make assumptions about the gods[88] and human institutions,[89] and naïve attempts by man to change fate.[90] All of these fables involving irony portray man's lack of awareness and his failure to understand either his own nature or the nature of life.

The situations that attract ironical treatment are wide-ranging and they may provide insights into the sorts of issues that the poet identified as needing attention and correction in the society of his day. It is true, no doubt, that these insights can be problematic because irony tends to distort its subject matter. It is

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[77] Muecke 1970: 38.
[78] B5.
[79] B43.
[80] B23, B63, B83, B113, B135 and B143.
[81] B45, B73, B79 and B123.
[82] B29 and B37.
[83] B38 and B109.
[84] B36.
[85] B46.
[86] B92.
[87] B131.
[88] B78 and B119.
[89] B118.
[90] B136.

also true that some of these issues could be viewed as common or 'universal' subjects that are targeted by ironists. Nevertheless, it is said that the ironist, by virtue of his choice of literary device, must make his implied criticisms relevant to his immediate social circumstances if he is to achieve his objective of being understood and properly interpreted by his contemporaries and if they are to take his point.[91] This means that, within certain limits, the irony in Babrius' fables can provide insights into the social and moral issues of the day.[92]

Why did Babrius choose to imbue his fables with irony? As Booth observes, fable is a natural vehicle for irony because of its reliance on two levels of meaning.[93] A similar deciphering process is necessary for interpreting the narrative of the fable and its ironical aspects. In both cases, the surface statement cannot be accepted at face value but must be carefully considered and interpreted.[94] If this process does not take place, the fable becomes a pretty or funny little story and that is all. In a similar way, the ironical statement that is overlooked will result in a misunderstanding of the actual events and their meaning.[95] It seems then that by imbuing his fables with irony, Babrius was capitalising on a natural tendency that is latent within the genre.

Now there can be little doubt that Babrius' ironic tone was deliberate and required an exercise of skill. As Booth observes, an author does not use irony by accident. It is studiously and very deliberately cultivated.[96] In taking an event from life and adapting it for ironical treatment, the writer "has consciously or unconsciously shaped the incident in his mind, cutting out irrelevancies, sharpening the contrasts, bringing incongruous elements into closer

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[91] Booth 1974: 6.

[92] According to Colebrook, for example, irony can reveal information about the nature of communication, especially in light of social expectations of sincerity and coherence (Colebrook 2004: 18).

[93] Booth 1974: 24.

[94] Booth 1974: 10-12.

[95] Booth 1974: 25.

[96] Booth 1974: 5-6.

relationship, or heightening the confident unawareness of the victim".[97] Furthermore, there is a considerable difference between successful and unsuccessful irony, just as there is a considerable difference between a joke that is told badly and one that is told well.[98] In my view, Babrius' success as an ironist is due to his skill in shaping the fables to convey irony. This involves selecting events with care and presenting those events with the appropriate content, arrangement, timing and tone.[99]

Admittedly, we cannot always discern how much 'shaping' Babrius is responsible for because we do not possess all of the sources he drew on. In some cases, however, we can compare a Babrian fable with another version and see the artistry that is involved in the use of irony. For one, B77 can be compared with that in the *Augustana* (P124). Earlier, I compared these two fables and observed that Babrius' version contains more direct speech than the *Augustana* version. This feature, in addition to creating a more vivid impression of the character of the fox, more effectively conveys irony. In the *Augustana* version, the audience is told that the fox praised the crow for its beauty and the words of the fox are reported using indirect speech. Babrius' use of direct speech enables the audience to take pleasure in the dramatic irony of the scene all the more. This is because there is a vivid contrast between the hidden intentions of the fox which are known to the audience and what the fox actually says to the crow. The *Augustana* version presents only a hint of dramatic irony, while the Babrian version develops dramatic irony in full.

As a poet who employs irony frequently, Babrius can be characterised as having an 'ironic viewpoint'. Regardless of whether this viewpoint belonged to Babrius himself or was simply a mask that he adopted as a poet, it is interesting to consider the nature of this viewpoint. To achieve irony, it is necessary to adopt

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[97] Muecke 1970: 46.
[98] Muecke 1970: 45.
[99] See Muecke 1970: 45.

a view of the world that is different to that of the majority. As Muecke puts it "a sense of irony depends for its material upon a lack of a sense of irony in others, much as scepticism depends on credulity."[100] Consequently, Babrius' ironic viewpoint would depend on a corresponding lack of irony in those around him. In addition, to produce irony it is necessary to maintain a sense of detachment from the world, life and its activities and to become an observer of situations and events.[101] Following this argument, in order for Babrius to introduce irony into his fables, he had to view life and its events as a spectator. As Kierkegaard says, in order to see irony, the poet must have a consciousness which is itself ironical.[102]

What was it about Babrius and his environment that might have contributed to this ironic view of the world? One possibility is that the poet was part of a broader literary trend toward the use of irony as a tool for social comment. Perhaps the relative economic prosperity of the period had a direct impact on literary activity,[103] giving writers time to reflect and the opportunity to act as detached observers. In this climate, it may have been relatively easy for the device of irony to flourish. In addition to this, Babrius was probably familiar with the use of irony by both his immediate predecessors and his contemporaries. Quintilian, for example, discusses the use of irony in his treatise on rhetoric and gives an example of Cicero using an ironic device.[104] Other writers of the first century BCE to second century CE, such as Horace, Catullus, Lucian, Tacitus and Juvenal, also make good use of irony.[105] Earlier Greek poets, too, used irony, including Homer, Sophocles and Aristophanes.[106]

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[100] Muecke 1970: 2.
[101] Muecke 1970: 35-36.
[102] Kierkegaard 1966: 337.
[103] See Hägg 1983: 105-107.
[104] Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.54-57.
[105] For a detailed examination of irony in Juvenal's writing see Braund 1988.
[106] See Muecke 1970: 14, 21, 26.

Modern studies suggest that by observing events and situations from the outside, the ironic observer today seeks to gain three things, namely, superiority, freedom and amusement. As Muecke explains:

> The ironic observer's awareness of himself as observer tends to enhance his feeling of freedom and induce a mood perhaps of serenity, or joyfulness, or even exultation. His awareness of the victim's unawareness invites him to see the victim as bound or trapped where he feels free; committed where he feels disengaged; swayed by emotions, harassed, or miserable, where he is dispassionate, serene, or even moved to laughter; trustful, credulous or naïve, where he is critical, sceptical, or content to suspend judgment. And where his own attitude is that of a man whose world appears real and meaningful, he will see the victim's world as illusory or absurd.[107]

In writing his fables, Babrius may well have sought and experienced a sense of superiority, of freedom from superficial attitudes and indeed, some amusement. Yet it is impossible to determine to what extent the 'real' Babrius actually felt surrounded by examples of man's lack of awareness, nor can we be certain to what extent the man behind the poetic persona strove to achieve such freedom and objectivity. The most that we can say is that in writing a collection of fables, Babrius appears to want to impart a sense of detachment from life. As Wilson and Sperber observe, ironical utterances aim to communicate a certain attitude and to create a certain impression on the listener.[108] The ironist's intention is to modify the listener's cognitive environment by making a certain set of assumptions apparent.[109] Generally speaking, the sorts of assumptions that are targeted by irony are those that reflect an unswervingly positive view of the world. Examples are the assumption that the world makes sense, that it is organised according to principles of reason, justice and logic, and that the rights of society and the individual can be reconciled.[110] This theory suggests that by adopting and using irony, Babrius wanted to challenge and modify the assumptions of his audience. By defying the customary expectations of his audience, Babrius aimed to free his audience from preconceptions and habitual ways of thinking.

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[107] Muecke 1970: 37.
[108] Wilson and Sperber 1992: 71.
[109] Wilson and Sperber 1992: 71.
[110] Muecke 1970: 68.

A secondary aim of irony has been described as corrective, moral or normative:

> Ironic situations...can be invented or presented by satirists whose object is to expose hypocrisy, wilful ignorance, pride, confident folly, rationalizing, or vanity. In such corrective or normative uses of irony, the victim to be exposed and discomfited is singled out; he is 'in the wrong' and, by contrast, those to whom he is exposed are 'in the right' or at least safe from this particular attack.[111]

This function of irony undoubtedly has a role in the Babrian fables, when characters are put in ironical situations to reveal and ridicule traits such as ignorance, pride and vanity. The moral judgments that underlie the ridicule of these weaknesses are implicit rather than explicit.[112] By presenting situations and ridiculing the victims, the writer aims to make people more self-aware, to condemn certain behaviours,[113] and to reinforce certain values and *mores*. This moral function of the fables will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Four.

A third purpose of irony is said to be the creation of 'amiable communities' of persons who share a similar view of the world.[114] By using an ironic tone, the writer aims to attract those who can decipher and sympathise with his ironic outlook, thereby creating a privileged group composed of the writer and the inner circle of those who share his sense of irony. As Booth observes, there is a sense of intimacy between the writer and his inner circle:

> The author I infer behind the false words is my kind of man, because he enjoys playing with irony, because he assumes *my* capacity for dealing with it, and — most important — because he grants me a kind of wisdom; he assumes that he does not have to spell out the shared and secret truths on which my reconstruction is to be built.[115]

This description is pertinent to the Babrian collection because in reading the fables, attentive readers are encouraged to stand back from life, to assume the role of spectators, and to laugh at the comedy of man being played out before

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[111] Muecke 1970: 66-67.

[112] On the lack of explicit moral judgments in irony see Frye 1957: 40.

[113] For further discussion of the condemnation that is associated with irony see Colston 1997.

[114] Booth 1974: 28.

[115] Booth 1974: 28.

them.[116] Through the mechanism of the fable, readers are initiated into an ironic view of the world and alongside the poet, they laugh at those on the outer, whilst simultaneously taking delight in the intimacy that is set up between themselves and the poet.

[116] See Romano 1979: 31.

III. Satire[117]

In his second prologue, Babrius claims to refrain from sharpening 'the teeth of his iambs' and to 'soften' their barbs well (καὶ τῶν ἰάμβων τοὺς ὀδόντας οὐ θήγω, /... εὖ δὲ κέντρα πρηύνας: lines 14-15). Most scholars appear to have accepted these claims at face value and to have interpreted them to mean that Babrius has softened the satirical tone that was normally associated with iambic verse.[118] It is for these reasons, perhaps, that the relationship between the genre of satirical writing and the Babrian fables has, to a large extent, been ignored. Nøjgaard, for example, dispenses with the topic in a single paragraph.[119]

Certainly, in the prologues, the poet claims to reject harsh satire. Yet this does not mean that a satirical tone is not at all present in the fables. Even if one reads the second prologue in a literal way, the poet claims to 'soften' the barbs of his fables, not to remove their 'sting' entirely. In some ways, Babrius' claim to 'soften' his fables could be compared to Phaedrus' claim in the prologue of his first book to joke about fictitious events (*fictis iocari nos meminerit fabulis*: line 7). In Phaedrus' case, this claim is put forward as a means to deflect criticism and defuse potential hostility toward himself or his fables.[120] In Babrius' case, the claim to 'soften' the fables gives an impression of harmlessness but it should not necessarily be taken at face value. Some of his fables have a definite satirical tone and some, if not all of them, have the potential to be used for satirical purposes. In support of this argument, I will outline the Greek tradition of writing satiric fables in iambic verse in order to illustrate the significance of Babrius' choice of metre. I will also explore some similarities between Babrius'

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[117] In this section, I will use the term 'satire' in its general, modern sense, to refer to something that is both humorous and critical (Hooley 2007: 1). On the nuances of the concept for the ancient Greeks and Romans see Elliott 1960: 100-104.

[118] Nøjgaard 1967: 194; Perry 1965: 4-5 fn. a; Rodríguez. Adrados 1999: 103; Holzberg 2002: 53.

[119] Nøjgaard 1967: 301.

[120] See Henderson 2001: 4.

fables and fables that appear in the poetry of Roman satirists. I will then discuss the nature and extent of satire in Babrius' collection.

By choosing to write his fables in iambic verse, Babrius was placing himself in a long line of poets who narrated fables in iambic verse for the purposes of satire. Archilochus, in the seventh century BCE, was the founder of the iambic genre and its application to satire.[121] In the surviving fragments of his poems, Archilochus uses iambic trimeters and dimeters to narrate two fables which form the basis for a satirical attack against his opponents, Lycambes and Kerykides.[122] Archilochus uses the first fable (The Fox and the Eagle) to suggest that his personal rival Lycambes (the eagle) will be brought to justice for allegedly breaking a marriage arrangement,[123] and the second fable (The Ape and the Fox) to portray Kerykides as an ape.[124] A number of other poets of the seventh and sixth centuries also employed iambic verse to narrate fables. In a fragment of Semonides' poetry, for example, iambic trimeters are used to refer to the fable of the Dung Beetle, Hare and Eagle, a fable that was typically used to threaten revenge.[125] Towards the end of the sixth century BCE, Hipponax wrote iambs. The surviving fragments of Hipponax's poetry convey the aggressive tone of his satire.[126] Hipponax has been credited with the invention of the choliambic metre used later by Babrius.[127] In the fourth century BCE, Callimachus revived the iambic genre.[128] Some similarities between Callimachus *Iambs* 2 and 4 and Babrius' fables have already been discussed. In addition, it is important to note that the fables in Callimachus' *Iambs* have a satirical as well as

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[121] Gerber 1997: 44.
[122] 4F1a-h and 4F2a-c in VD 471-473.
[123] See van Dijk 1997: 138-144.
[124] See van Dijk 1997: 144-147.
[125] Van Dijk 1997: 149-150. This fable is also referred to in Ar. *Pax* 1-232.
[126] See fr. 121 and 129 in Degani 1983: 124, 132-4. Other poets who probably composed iambs in the style of Archilochus at this time were the minor poets Annanius and Hermippus (Gerber 1997: 13). Hellenistic iambic poets include Machon and Herodas, both of whom "exhibit comic-iambic combinations", while Cercidas' *Meliamboi* have a lyric form but satirical content (Freudenburg 2005: 36).
[127] Mulroy 1992: 113.
[128] Rodríguez Adrados 1999: 242.

an ironical tone. Callimachus' fable about Zeus, the Animals and Men, for example, satirises mankind for obtaining the power of speech from animals,[129] and the purpose of Callimachus' fable of the Laurel, Olive and Bramble is, as van Dijk observes, "to cut the addressee down to his real size".[130] If Babrius was, as Holzberg suggests, consciously imitating Callimachus' *Iambs* in other respects, then we could expect to find something of Callimachus' satirical and ironical tone in Babrius' work.[131]

It is said that writers and poets of the Second Sophistic were keen to connect with the Greek past, albeit in different ways and to different degrees.[132] In line with this, it appears that Babrius chose to write in a metre that connected him directly with the Greek satirical tradition.[133] Following in the metrical footsteps of earlier Greek satirists such as Archilochus and Callimachus, Babrius must have been aware of the potential use of fables to mock personal rivals, threaten revenge and aggressively undercut opponents. Why then does Babrius claim to 'soften' his satire? To answer this question, we need to investigate Roman satirical literature.

In the recent past, some scholars distinguished between fables and Roman satire, viewing them as distinct and unrelated genres.[134] Today, scholars more readily recognise the variety of influences and traditions that contributed to Roman satire[135] and the fact that there is a connection between the fable genre

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[129] Van Dijk 1997: 230-237.
[130] Van Dijk 1997: 245.
[131] Holzberg 2002: 52-53.
[132] Goldhill 2001: 14.
[133] This is in spite of the fact that the choliambic metre was not popular with everyone. In the prologue to his *Satires*, for example, Persius attacks 'lame poets' and their 'limping metrics': Pers. 1.13-23. For discussion of this see Dominik and Wehrle 1999: 8-10; Nisbet 1968: 40-41.
[134] In speaking of Phaedrus, for example, it was said: "In antiquity writers of fable were not regarded as part of the tradition of satire, and in spite of certain instructive affinities between the technique of the satirists and the personal and political innuendoes that underlie the words of Phaedrus, *a collection of short fables is far removed from satire in matter and manner*" (emphasis added). Coffey 1989: 7.
[135] Hooley 2007: 2.

and Roman satire.[136] The link is clearly evident in the poetry of Quintus Ennius and Lucilius, for example, both writing in the second century BCE. Ennius was lauded as Rome's first writer of satire.[137] He wrote a collection of poems in a number of different metres including the iambic metre. Although it is in a fragmentary state, it is possible to identify a number of fables in the work. There is a version of the fable of the Crested Lark,[138] a fragment of the fable of the Piper and the Fish,[139] and a reference to a fable involving a debate between Life and Death.[140] The first two of these fables are in Babrius' collection.[141] Lucilius was given the epithet *iambicus*.[142] He too incorporates fables into his satirical poetry, including a fragment of the fable of the Ant[143] and the fable of the Fox and the Sick Lion.[144] Both of these fables are in Babrius' collection.[145]

In the *Satires* of Horace from the first century BCE, there are at least four fables.[146] The first is the fable of the Ant (*Satire* I.1.32–40). Horace alludes to this fable in order to satirise mankind's tendency to want more than he needs. The same fable appears in Babrius' collection (B140). The second fable alluded to is that of the Man with Two Wallets (*Satire* II.3.298–299). Horace uses this fable to support his ironic claim that unlike other men, he is able to see the faults of others as well as his own. This fable also appears in Babrius' collection (B66). The third fable, that of the Calf and the Frog (*Satire* II.3.314–320), is told in full in the context of a dialogue between Horace and Damasippus, a Stoic

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[136] Muecke 2005: 37.
[137] Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.66. For discussion see Müller 1976; also Del Vecchio and Fiore 1998.
[138] Gell. 2.29.1.
[139] Enn. *Sat.* 20.
[140] Enn. *Sat.* 28-31.
[141] See B88 and B9.
[142] Apul. *Apol.* 10.
[143] See Lucil. 19.586-7.
[144] Lucil. 30.1111-2. For discussion see Cozzoli 1995.
[145] See B140 and B103.
[146] The *Epistles* also contain a reference to a fable (The Fox and the Sick Lion): Hor. *Ep.* 1.1.73-5. In the *Satires*, Horace has Damasippus respectfully describe Archilochus as "a weighty comrade" (*comites educare tantos*). This suggests that Horace may have viewed his own work as the continuation of an honourable tradition: see Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.12.

philosopher. Horace has Damasippus recount a long lecture given by his Stoic teacher on the subject of the madness of mankind, giving Horace ample opportunity to satirise the style of Stoic philosophers. At the end of this lecture, Horace asks Damasippus what kind of madness he thinks that Horace suffers from because Horace thinks of himself as quite sane (300–302). Damasippus, in turn, accuses Horace of trying to imitate important men, like the frog in the following fable:

> *Absentis ranae pullis vituli pede pressis,*
> *unus ubi effugit, matri denarrat, ut ingens*
> *belua cognatos eliserit: illa rogare,*
> *quantane? num tantum, sufflans se, magna fuisset?*
> *"maior dimidio." "num tanto?" cum magis atque*
> *se magis indaret, "non, si te ruperis," inquit,*
> *"par eris." haec a te non multum abludit imago.*[147]

Horace makes Damasippus use the fable to ridicule Horace's own attempts to rival great poets who are 'bigger' than himself. Horace takes the criticism, which is in fact self-criticism, cheerfully and he ends the dialogue with an ironic plea, saying 'O, the greater madman, please spare the lesser!' (*O maior tandem parcas, insane, minori!*).[148] The same fable appears in Babrius' collection (B28). There are many similarities between Horace's version and that of Babrius, particularly in the use of dialogue. There is nothing, in fact, that would prevent Babrius' version being used for the same sort of satirical purpose as Horace's.

The fourth fable in Horace's *Satires* is the popular fable of the Town and Country Mouse (*Satire* II.6.79-117). Horace compares the difficulties of life in the city of Rome with the pleasures of a simple country life on his recently acquired Sabine farm (1–76).[149] He then recites the fable, placing it in the mouth of his

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[147] [A mother frog was away from home when her young brood were crushed under the foot of a calf. Only one escaped to tell his mother, how a huge beast had dashed his siblings to death. "How big?" she asks, puffing herself out. "Surely not as big as this?" "Half as big again." "Surely not big like this?" and she swelled herself out more and more. "No, even if you burst," he said, "you'll never be as large." This image does not fall far short of resembling you.] Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.314-20. Translation adapted from Rushton Fairclough 2005: 179-181.

[148] Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.326.

[149] Holzberg maintains that this fable contains veiled criticism of Maecenas (Horace's patron), with Maecenas as the *mus urbanus* and Horace as the *mus rusticus*. He points to the expanded

rustic neighbour Cervius, who is said to be fond of telling *fabellae* (77–8). Again, there are marked similarities between Horace's and Babrius' version (B108). Both poets have produced a lengthy version of the fable (Babrius' version runs for 32 lines and Horace's for 38). Both delight in poetic descriptions such as the description of the fine food that is available in the city.[150] Both use direct speech when the city mouse invites the country mouse to dinner[151] and again when the country mouse states its preference for its old way of life.[152]

Even closer to Babrius' own time, we find fables in the satirical *Epigrams* of Martial (41–104 CE). The same fable of the ox and toad, for example, is referred to by Martial (at 10.79) in order to satirise an official named Otacilius:

> *Ad lapidem Torquatus habet praetoria quartum;*
> *ad quartum breve rus emit Otacilius.*
> *Torquatus nitidas vario de marmore thermas*
> *extruxit; cucumam fecit Otacilius.*
> *disposuit daphnona suo Torquatus in agro;*
> *castaneas centum sevit Otacilius.*
> *consule Torquato vici fuit ille magister,*
> *non minor in tanto visus honore sibi.*
> *grandis ut exiguam bos ranam ruperat olim,*
> *sic, puto, Torquatus rumpet Otacilium.*[153]

Relying on similarities such as these, Morgan identifies a relationship between Babrius' verse and Martial's and she hypothesises that Babrius may have become familiar with Martial's style as a result of a period of time spent in the

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form of the fable as well as its lack of a moral as evidence. He also claims to see a hint of Maecenas' philosophical views in the speech of the city mouse at lines 94-97 (Holzberg 2002: 35). Holzberg's reading of the fable is implausible not only because Maecenas is Horace's patron and friend but because Horace's use of fables elsewhere in communicating with Maecenas seems straightforward enough: see Hor. *Ep.* 1.7.29-36.

[150] In particular, compare B108.16-18 and Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.100-109.

[151] Compare B108.8-13 and Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.89-97.

[152] Compare B108.28-32 and Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.115-117.

[153] [Torquatus has a palace at the fourth milestone: Otacilius bought a small farm at the fourth. Torquatus constructed splendid warm baths of varied marble: Otacilius made a cooking pot. Torquatus laid out a laurel grove on his land; Otacilius planted a hundred chestnuts. When Torquatus was consul, Otacilius was wardmaster, in which high office he felt himself not inferior. As once the bulky ox ruptured the tiny frog, so, methinks, Torquatus will rupture Otacilius.] Trans. Shackleton Bailey 2006: 397-399. For other similarities between Babrius and Martial see Weinreich 1931.

same literary circle in Rome.[154] Given that so little is known about Babrius' life, these suggestions are tantalising but they remain speculative.

In sum, there are at least nine Babrian fables that we find also in the works of Roman satirists: two in Ennius, two in Lucilius, at least one in Martial and four in Horace. The similarities between the fables of Horace, Martial and Babrius in particular, suggest that some fables were particularly associated with satire and that Babrius' versions of these fables could easily be adapted to satirical purposes. It is also likely that Babrius was aware of the use of certain fables for satirical purposes by his predecessors and that he was influenced by this tradition. It is even possible that when people of Babrius' day read or heard Babrius' version of the fable of the town mouse and country mouse and the toad and the ox, they would recall the satirical purposes to which these fables had been put by earlier poets such as Horace.

This raises doubts about the reliability of Babrius' claim in the second prologue to 'soften' the tone of his fables: Babrius' choice of metre and the evidence of a close connection between the genre of fables and Roman satire directly contradict this claim. In my view, Babrius' claim in the second prologue to 'soften' his tone is itself ironic and it is intended to disarm and mislead an unwary audience. Babrius anticipates that the moral lessons of his fables will be more readily absorbed if he claims to write fables in a gentle and poetic tone. But this is merely the honey coating to accompany his bitter medicine. In fact, his fables maintain a satirical tone, not only in their metre, but also in their content. To be sure, Babrius' fables do not contain the same level of explicit and potentially explosive political satire that can be seen in Phaedrus' fable collection which quite openly satirises, among others, Pompey the Great.[155] Nonetheless there are, in my view, plenty of fables in the Babrian collection that

[154] Morgan 2007: 329.
[155] See Henderson 2001.

have a satirical tone. Fables about kings, of which the lion is the usual animal representative, are a notable category.[156] There are fables that suggest that kings are tyrannical and cruel,[157] cunning and conniving,[158] and weak and stupid.[159] As in the case of Phaedrus' fables about ape emperors,[160] sick lion kings[161] and dictatorial kites,[162] Babrius' fables about lions represent ways to criticise and ridicule kingship. While Babrius' satire is not as developed or targeted as Phaedrus', it is nonetheless evident. In addition to this, Babrius' fables adopt a satirical stance toward many traits and modes of behaviour such as vanity, greed, and boasting. Babrius' treatment of these subjects will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

There are two further aspects of Babrius' fables that suggest the use of satire. The first is his reliance upon irony, a tool of satire that we discussed in detail in the previous section. The other, however, is Babrius' use of language. According to Highet, all satiric writing contains trivial and comic words and nearly all satiric writing relies on crude, colloquial and anti-literary words.[163] Babrius' language is punctuated by vulgar sexual expressions,[164] crudity,[165]

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[156] For the possibility of political satire in B100 see Havet 1921. For Phaedrus' satirical lion fables see Henderson 2001: 180-186. For a more general discussion of Phaedrus' *weltanschauung* see Currie 1984: 508-511.

[157] E.g. B44 in which a lion uses false accusations to turn his enemies against each other so that he can overcome each of them in turn; B67 in which a lion that is helped by a wild ass shows ingratitude and then threatens the ass; and B90 in which a lion that has gone mad terrorises the other animals.

[158] E.g. B103 in which an old lion feigns illness in order to lure animals into his cave; B99 in which a lion requests that an eagle surrender its wings if it wishes to make a bond of friendship; and B97 in which a lion pretends to invite a bull to dinner in order to kill it.

[159] E.g. B98 in which a lion is tricked into removing its own claws and teeth and is then viciously killed and B82 in which a lion is alarmed by a mouse running over its mane.

[160] Ph. 4.13.

[161] Ph. 4.14.

[162] Ph. 1.31.

[163] Highet 1962: 18.

[164] E.g. the description of the wife (at B116.7) who enthusiastically engages with a lover and the description of the middle-aged man's sexual excess (at B22.5) because he has two lovers.

[165] E.g. the description of the camel defecating (ἔχεζε) as it crosses the river in B40.2; the crudity of Hermes telling a dog not to 'piss' on his statue (μηδ' ἐμοὶ προσουρήσῃς) in B48.7; and the all too vivid description of the boy falling into his mother's arms and vomiting (ἤμει) in B34.7.

bitter invective,[166] and vivid descriptions of violence.[167] At times, Babrius appears to want to shock his audience. This is consistent with the goal of satire which is to achieve a degree of freedom by simultaneously laughing at, and critiquing, social limitations and constraints. As Frye says:

> [satire is] poetry assuming a special function of analysis, that is, of breaking up the lumber of stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitious terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatisms, oppressive fashions, and all other things that impede the free movement of society.[168]

Yet Babrius' use of satire is closely linked with another genre: that of comedy.[169] This combination makes the fables all the more effective from the point of view of engaging the audience. The victims of Babrius' satire are attacked and conquered but this is achieved with both wit and humour. The use of humour does not nullify the satire rather, it is an essential part of it.[170] The degree of humour that is present in the fables acts as a counterweight to the degree of viciousness in the satire, but each retains its force. Satire identifies and attacks those aspects of society that are deemed to be 'wrong' or objectionable. Comedy relies on a shared understanding about what in society is amusing. In combining the two, Babrius seeks to encourage greater insight into, and detachment from, certain forms of behaviour. In the next section, I will consider this use of humour more closely.

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[166] E.g. the bitter denunciation of the Arabs in B57.12-14.

[167] E.g. the description of the lizard 'splitting open from the middle' (διαῤῥαγῆναί ... ἐκ μέσου) in B41.1.

[168] Frye quoted in Romano 1979: 5.

[169] For a discussion of the connection between humour and satire in Roman literature more generally see Plaza 2006.

[170] Frye 1957: 224.

IV. Humour

Humour has been described as a form of *sensus communis*.[171] It reminds us of what is shared in our everyday lives, making explicit the commonalities that are otherwise implicit.[172] Humour also involves a form of *dissensus communis* in the sense that it acts as a mechanism for creating distance, enabling individuals to temporarily become spectators of their own lives and to see the amusing aspects of their world. As Critchley puts it:

> humour is a form of critical social anthropology, defamiliarizing the familiar, demythologizing the exotic and inverting the world of common sense. Humour views the world awry, bringing us back to the everyday by estranging us from it.[173]

Following this theory, I suggest that in encountering fables such as Babrius' and being amused by them, the people of Babrius' time temporarily became 'spectators' of their own and others' lives, beliefs, morals and social structures. This notion of spectatorship seems to fit well with the same phenomena in other areas of Roman life, including public oratory, legal contexts, the theatre and sporting events. In a literary context, the fables portray human behaviours that are familiar and typical but, at the same time, the fables allow a comic release from social convention, presenting an alternative world in which the audience is distanced from human behaviour and given an opportunity to observe it and to be critical of it.[174] By presenting unexpected outcomes and exaggerated forms of behaviour, the fables also give their audience a pleasurable, fictional and temporary escape from the rules of ordinary life.[175] In this way, the Babrian fables provide insights into the *sensus* and *dissensus communis* of society in the first to second centuries CE.[176]

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[171] Critchley 2002: 18.

[172] Critchley 2002: 18.

[173] Critchley 2002: 65.

[174] The use of realism as a basis for comedy is also evident in ancient novels from the same period (see Holzberg 1995: 9).

[175] Clarke 2007: 7.

[176] At the same time, it is necessary to take into account humour's tendency to distort, exaggerate and suppress (see Braund 1989: 1-3). I will discuss this further below.

A preliminary question is, of course, whether an audience would have been amused by the Babrian fables. One indication that this is more than likely is the fact that rhetoricians in Babrius' time explicitly recommend the use of fables as a means to entertain and amuse an audience, whether in the Senate or the courtroom. Quintilian speaks of fables as a useful means to provoke laughter,[177] for example, and Dio Chrysostomus refers to Aesop's fables as comical.[178] For rhetoricians to recommend this technique, fables must have been capable of causing amusement. Fables may not have been used frequently, nor was their use always appropriate. The appropriateness of a fable could be amplified or diminished depending on the quality of the narration, the context, and the audience's receptivity. As Clarke observes "[l]aughter could win over a judge or an audience. But it could also backfire and discredit the speaker."[179] The skill was to know when and how to use a fable for the purposes of humour and this skill was acquired by means of rhetorical training and education.

Some fable writers themselves appear to have perceived fables as humorous. In the prologue to his first book of fables, Phaedrus states that his stories will give rise to laughter (*risum movet*: line 3) and, in his prologue, Avianus says that his fables contain key ideas of life under the appearance of common jokes.[180] Van Dijk's analysis of a large number of Greek and Roman sources reveals that humour was widely regarded as one of the objectives of the fable in addition to its persuasive, moral and didactic functions. Van Dijk study of this topic concludes as follows:

> This comical function ... might seem something completely different from the moral–didactic functions mentioned above, but is often combined with one or the other (and/or with the persuasive function). Even more, this felicitous blend of *utile dulci* is said to be the genre's strong point.[181]

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[177] Quint. *Inst.* 1.9.1-3 and 6.3.44.
[178] D. Chr. 72.13. Also see Cic. *De or.* 1.17.25 and 2.66.264; Him. *Or.* 46.4-5.
[179] Clarke 2007: 17.
[180] G59 in VD 431.
[181] Van Dijk 1997: 75-76.

This suggests that if Babrius viewed the fable in the same way as the writers who were his predecessors, contemporaries and followers he most probably viewed humour as an important feature of his fables.

Further evidence of this objective can be found in the references to laughter in the text itself. Although neither of the prologues mentions humour,[182] the verb 'to laugh' (γελάω) does appear a number of times in the fables, usually in the context of one character laughing at another. Examples include the ant laughing at the grasshopper in B140.7, the gods laughing at the mother ape in B56.5, and the camel commenting on being laughed at in B80.4. On two occasions, the voice of the moralist, rather than that of a fable character, uses the verb γελάω to suggest that the situation portrayed in the fable is laughable. The first instance occurs in B45.12. The fable describes a goatherd who, in trying to coax some wild goats to stay with his flock, not only fails in his objective but manages to lose his original flock as well. The final three lines of the fable read as follows:

> ὁ δ' αἰπόλος γελοῖος ἦλθεν εἰς οἴκους
> αἰγῶν ἔρημος· ἐλπίσας δὲ τὰς κρείσσους
> οὐκ ὤνατ' οὐδ' ὧν αὐτὸς εἶχεν ἐκ πρώτης.[183]

The goatherd's situation is described as 'laughable' (γελοῖος). The second instance occurs in the epimythion of B84.[184] In this fable, a gnat settles on the horn of a bull. It asks the bull whether it is too heavy and whether it should move. The bull replies that it does not matter whether the gnat stays or goes because it did not even notice the gnat's arrival. The moralist then describes the

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[182] Nøjgaard suggests that Babrius does not mention comedy in his first prologue because this would "blur the image of the gently poetic fable" that Babrius aims to present (Nøjgaard 1967: 193-194). This is not necessarily the case. As discussed in the previous section, Babrius' claim to write in a 'gentle' tone should not necessarily be taken at face value. It is possible that Babrius' prologue does not mention comedy because the connection between fables and humour was so well recognised that it did not need to be stated.

[183] [The laughable goatherd went to his house bereft of his goats. Having hoped for better goats, he did not profit, nor did he have what was his at the outset.]

[184] Vaio states that this epimythion is probably of spurious origin (Vaio 2001: 122-123). Even so, it is interesting that the moralist who added the epimythion interpreted the subject of the fable to be humorous.

insignificant man who overestimates his own importance as 'laughable' (γελοῖος: line 7). Apart from the verb γελάω 'to laugh', there is also the verb παίζω which, in its more positive sense, means 'to jest or joke' and, in its more negative sense, 'to mock'.[185] This verb appears in a number of fables including B32 when Eros is described as departing after 'jesting merrily' (καλῶς παίξας: line 9) and B68 when Zeus jokingly agrees to an archery contest with Apollo (ὁ Ζεὺς δὲ παίζων ἠρίδαινε τῷ Φοίβῳ: line 3).[186]

If we accept then that one of the objectives of the Babrian fable was humour, can we identify the characteristics of Babrius' humour in the fables? Nøjgaard suggests that the distinguishing mark of Babrius' humour is its reliance upon the absurd.[187] Nøjgaard then identifies two types of comedy that feature in the Babrian fables: burlesque and parody. Burlesque is defined as "the annulment of a fictitious world by antithetical confrontation with the real world".[188] He cites B52 as an example, in which he says the fabulist establishes a typical situation (the bulls pulling a creaking wagon into town) and then contrasts it with the absurd (the wagon driver talking to the wagon and admonishing it for creaking).[189] Parody he defines as "breaking the laws of the fable" and "poking fun at the literary form".[190] Nøjgaard claims that in B31 and B85, Babrius parodies the epic genre by creating a discord between content and structure.[191]

Nøjgaard's analysis is useful in terms of identifying some of the methods used by Babrius to introduce parody and paradox into his collection. In accordance with his general approach, however, Nøjgaard is concerned more with the

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[185] See entry under παίζω in LSJ.

[186] The verb παίζω is also used in the sense of 'to play', such as in B125.1 when an ass breaks some roof tiles while 'playing about' (παίζων). Another verb that can sometimes indicate humour is the verb τέρπω 'to delight or please'. Instances of this verb can be found in B125.6, B105.5 and B106.29.

[187] Nøjgaard 1967: 303.

[188] Nøjgaard 1967: 304.

[189] Nøjgaard 1967: 305.

[190] Nøjgaard 1967: 306-307.

[191] Nøjgaard 1967: 308.

structure of the fables than their content and consequently his analysis of Babrius' humour is restricted. Nøjgaard also appears to assume that the absurd equates to humour but this is not necessarily the case. He does not explain which fables may have provoked humour and why. Admittedly, this is not a straightforward task. As Mary Beard has observed, to try to understand what amused people in the ancient Roman world stretches us to the very limit of our ability because humour is so culture specific.[192] At the same time, it is worthwhile trying to understand what may have amused the people of Babrius' time in the fables because, by doing so, we may gain unique insights into the society and culture of the day.

In his recent study of Roman attitudes toward humour in the period between 100 BCE and 250 CE (the period within which Babrius is thought to have lived), Clarke focuses on visual sources in order to reveal subjects which amused a broad spectrum of people in Roman society. Clarke identifies a variety of different subjects as humorous to the Romans. He observes, for example, that Roman humour created categories of 'them–us', involving mockery of non-Romans particularly Pygmies and Ethiopians and deformed persons.[193] He also finds evidence of humour that depicted ordinary folk in embarrassing or compromising situations involving sex, drink and gambling.[194] Another form of humour targeted non-élites such as the slaves and the poor, while at the other end of the spectrum, Roman humour also targeted élite pretensions.[195] Finally, Clarke claims to find "abundant comic imagery of typical Romans engaged in atypical sexual pursuits".[196] This suggests that the Romans were amused by certain sexual acts which were considered taboo. Clarke concludes his analysis with the following summary of humour in this period:

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[192] Beard 2009.
[193] Clarke 2007: 87-107, 231.
[194] Clarke 2007: 120-125.
[195] Clarke 2007: 125-128.
[196] Clarke 2007: 164.

> The power that humor challenges is not just that of the imperial house or the elite. Humor can target any power — whether it's the overbearing ego-projection of an individual in one's own group or that of the emperor himself. For this reason, humorous visual culture encompasses all classes, from the rabble in the top rows of the Colosseum to the literati in their drawing rooms. And it draws its material from every practice of daily life, from worship of the gods to defecating in a common latrine.[197]

There are many similarities between the subjects that Clarke identifies as humorous to the Romans and the subjects of Babrius' fables. The Babrian fables do, for example, create categories of 'other' and ridicule them. The fables that target the Arabs are particularly noteworthy, such as B57 (which supposedly explains why the Arabs are more deceitful and dishonest than other races) and B8 (which describes a camel outwitting his Arabian driver). Women represent another category of 'other', as in B16 in which a wolf learns not to trust what women say. Fables that describe unfortunate physical characteristics represent another category of 'other'. In B56, for example, Babrius describes how the gods were stirred to laughter when an ugly mother ape put forward her baby as a contestant in a beauty contest. Just as the gods in the fable laugh at the ugliness of the baby ape, one can imagine this fable being used to satirise a particular individual's appearance. Other fables that could be used for the purposes of mocking ugliness and deformity are B10 in which Aphrodite confronts an ugly slave-girl, B32 in which a weasel is transformed into a beautiful bride, and B54 in which a eunuch seeks advice about the likelihood of fathering a child.

Some of the fables appear to use humour to target the poor as well as slaves. B51 is about a poor widow who shears her sheep so close to its flesh that it complains and asks to be taken to a professional shearer or else a butcher. B10 is about an ugly slave-girl who is showered with expensive gifts by her master and spends her time praying to the goddess Aphrodite in thanks. Other fables mock the notion that the powerless can become powerful,[198] and the notion that

[197] Clarke 2007: 234.

[198] E.g. B40 and B134.

those who are insignificant, unattractive and lacking in eloquence sometimes try to imitate those who are not.[199] Mockery of pretentious professionals can be seen in fables about physicians and lawyers. B75, for example, tells the story of a hopeless physician and B120 tells the story of a physician who claims to be exceptionally skilled but looks pale and sickly. In a similar way, B118 mocks legal institutions by demonstrating that living beside a courthouse is not a guarantee of one's safety. Mockery of élite tastes, luxury and dinner parties can also be seen in B46, B106 and B108.

Bawdy and scatological themes, as well as immoderate behaviour, are also portrayed in the fables. B22 describes a middle-aged man who behaves inappropriately by keeping two mistresses, B131 portrays a young man who loses his fortune playing dice and then foolishly gambles his winter cloak because he thinks that Spring has arrived, and B80 describes a camel owner who attends a drinking party and tries to make his camel dance to the music of flutes and cymbals. In B40, a camel feels dismayed when it sees its own dung float past it after it has defecated in a river and, in B48, Hermes is alarmed by a dog's proposal to anoint his roadside statue by urinating upon it. Sexual humour about taboo subjects including sexual trios and bestiality is also possible in the fables. B116 is about a threesome involving a married couple and a handsome youth and B10 portrays a man who is in love with his ugly slave-girl. The impossibility of physical intimacy between humans and animals is explored in B32 about a weasel in love with a handsome young man and B98 about a lion in love with a maiden.

In sum, the fact that there is some correlation between the themes of visual humour of the first and second centuries CE and the themes of a large number of the Babrian fables from the same period adds support to the argument that one of the objectives of the Babrian fables was to amuse a wide audience. Many

[199] E.g. B41, B72, B73 and B137.

of the subjects that the fables deal with correspond to subjects that are thought to have amused a wide spectrum of people in Roman society, and in this sense, the humour in the fables appears to reflect the *sensus communis*. It is interesting also that the targets of the humour belong to a wide spectrum of individuals, including non-Romans, ordinary folk, the élite, and those with distinctive physical characteristics. By targeting different segments of society through the humour in the fables, the members of Babrius' audience would temporarily become spectators of their society. This fits well with the sense of spectatorship that Babrius also encourages through his use of satire and irony.

In considering the humorous aspects of the Babrian fables, it is interesting to reflect on whether the same elements are employed in humorous fables today. To a twenty-first century audience, some of the subjects of the fables appear to lean more toward bad taste than humour. Laughter at the pretensions of doctors and lawyers is familiar enough to us, for example, whereas laughter at a person's physical appearance is viewed as less socially acceptable. This highlights the fact that there are cultural differences in the way in which fables are used in the two societies. At the same time, the fable continues to be used in contemporary times for the sake of humour and this dimension of the fable continues to be well recognised. Therefore, one could say that the association with humour, and the way in which humour functions in the fable, has not shifted. To paraphrase Critchley, the humorous fable is still used as a way to defamiliarise the familiar and to invert the world of common sense. The aspect that has shifted over time is the subject of the humour and it is this aspect that reflects cultural change.

PART II

Part II is concerned with the themes and morals of the Babrian fable collection. Chapter Three will discuss the dominant themes of the fable collection, namely, conflict, suffering and survival. It will compare Babrius' treatment of these themes with the presentation of the same themes in the *Augustana* fables and the fables of Phaedrus. It will suggest reasons as to why certain differences exist, why certain themes are more prominent than others in Babrius' work, and the extent to which the themes in Babrius' fables may reflect life and society in the first to second centuries CE. Chapter Four examines the moral framework of the Babrian collection by analysing the range of behaviours that are either censured or praised in the fables. Opposing the views of other scholars, I will argue that Babrius' objective is to deliver moral instruction *as well as* to entertain. I will also argue that Babrius' primary moral purpose is not to reinforce upper class values but rather to demonstrate that every individual can make behavioural choices that will increase his/her chances of survival in spite of living in a hostile and unjust world.

CHAPTER THREE: THEMES

This chapter identifies and discusses the key themes of the Babrian fable collection, namely, conflict, suffering and survival.[1] While the same general themes can be observed in the *Augustana* collection and the fables of Phaedrus, they are presented differently in each case. Babrius' portrayal of the effects of conflict on the psychology and inner emotional world of the characters is particularly distinctive. In this chapter I will discuss possible explanations for these differences and the extent to which the themes of the Babrian fables may have been of contemporary relevance.

Nøjgaard does not examine the themes of the Babrian fables but he does, in his final chapter, present views about Babrius' general outlook on life.[2] These views have coloured the way in which subsequent scholars have interpreted the fables.[3] In particular, Nøjgaard relies heavily on the assumption that Babrius was a royal tutor and courtier. Because of this presumed social status, Babrius is cast as a defender of the established order.[4] Meekness is said to be the general principle of Babrius' system of thought in view of the fact that it signifies the reconciliation of man with the world and voluntary acceptance of one's destiny.[5] In addition, Babrius' outlook on fate is described as 'optimistic fatalism' because Babrius is said to encourage man to resign himself to fate.[6] Nøjgaard concludes that Babrius' message is akin to the philosophy of Pangloss

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[1] As Morgan points out (Morgan 2007: 62-63), conflict, survival and suffering are general themes that can be broken down into more specific topics such as abuse, oppression, fortune or fear (as discussed by Cascajero 1991 and 1992). The reason for my commitment to these general themes is that they are critical for an understanding of the fable collection as a whole and they will provide the foundation from which I will analyse the moral framework of the fables in detail in the next chapter. In order to counter Morgan's concern that a study of general themes does not in itself enable one to discern how fable collections differ from each other, I will devote the second part of this chapter to this question.

[2] Nøjgaard 1967: 352-365.

[3] See for example Holzberg 2002: 9.

[4] Nøjgaard 1967: 357.

[5] Nøjgaard 1967: 354.

[6] Nøjgaard 1967: 364.

in Voltaire's *Candide*. Nøjgaard says: "[s]elon notre fabuliste la tâche de l'homme est de comprendre que tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes."[7]

Nøjgaard's conclusions are problematic because, as mentioned in Chapter One above, the view that Babrius was a royal tutor and courtier is based on tenuous evidence. Although Babrius' work, like most extant texts from the Greek and Roman worlds, was most probably the product of a man from a privileged class comprising a small group of educated males, this does not automatically indicate that Babrius sought to reinforce the *status quo* through his fables, nor can it lead to any firm conclusions about Babrius' personal attitudes towards social or political change. A further problem with this approach is that Nøjgaard appears to have fallen victim to the 'biographical fallacy': an assumption that the attitudes of the 'real' Babrius can be brought to light by examining his work.[8] Holzberg takes a similar approach in examining Babrius' work. Holzberg maintains that it is self-evident that Babrius' world in the fables is that of a "firmly established monarchy" and that Babrius had an "anti-democratic viewpoint".[9] This view overlooks a series of fables in Babrius' collection that portray sympathetic attitudes toward the suffering of those who are weak, powerless and unfortunate.[10] Furthermore, it does not take into account the connection between the fables and the genres of satire and comedy that we discussed in Chapter Two above. Given this connection, it is possible that the author has adopted a poetic persona that is quite different to that of the 'real' Babrius. It is also possible that there is a degree of distortion in Babrius' treatment of certain themes to allow greater opportunity for comedy, satire and

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[7] Nøjgaard 1967: 365.

[8] For a discussion of the biographical fallacy see Braund 1989: 1-2.

[9] Holzberg 2002: 60.

[10] Examples of fables that demonstrate sympathetic attitudes toward misfortune include B12, B52, and B108. Examples of fables that encourage gentleness include B18, B51 and B102. Examples of fables that depict victories by the weak include B53, B69, B96, B107 and B112.

irony.[11] A preferable approach to sifting through the fables in order to find Babrius' supposed attitudes is simply to focus on the fables themselves so that the underlying themes of the collection can be examined. I believe my approach to be more reliable because it depends solely on the literary work itself and does not set out to create "tenuous phantoms" of historical reconstruction.[12]

Morgan's study of fable collections from the early Roman Empire represents an important and recent development. In the course of studying a range of ethical material including proverbs, fables, *gnomai* and *exempla*, Morgan analyses the fable collections of Babrius and Phaedrus simultaneously.[13] In doing so, she discusses some of the major concerns that are common to both collections, such as the nature of social relations between the strong and the weak. Morgan's objective is to 'map' the ethical landscape of the early Roman Empire. With this aim in view, it is appropriate that Morgan examines all of the fable collections from this period together in order to identify common themes. The only disadvantage with this approach is that there are, as we shall see, important differences in the way in which Babrius and Phaedrus treat these themes. The present chapter will examine these differences and, in addition, it will contrast Babrius' fables and the fables in the *Augustana*. It will also examine thematic aspects that are not discussed in detail by Morgan, for example, the theme of suffering, the different types of conflicts that are portrayed in the fables, and the range of survival tactics used by both predators and prey.

I. Conflict

The Babrian fables portray a world that is characterised by conflict and violence. These conflicts involve characters of all types including animals, plants, humans and gods. Conflict is portrayed as a prevalent and immutable

[11] On the issue of distortion see Braund 1989: 2.
[12] Cherniss 1943 reprinted in Sullivan 1962: 22.
[13] Morgan 2007: 57-83.

part of existence. It can have both negative and positive effects: on the one hand, it can lead to strife and disaster for the individual or the community, while, on the other, it can lead to the gaining of wisdom and survival. There are two different types of conflict that are portrayed in the fables. I have termed these 'natural' conflicts and 'formal' competitions. 'Natural' conflicts occur between predators and prey. 'Formal' competitions involve creatures of a similar type vying for a particular honour. We will examine various aspects of these two categories of conflict below.

The characters in the fables exist and interact in a hierarchical paradigm. Predators such as men, lions, and foxes are at the top of the hierarchy, while creatures such as fish and birds are at the bottom. Peace is presented as an exceptional utopian ideal, for example in B102, while conflict between different levels of the hierarchy is presented as normal and inevitable. Within this paradigm, each creature does its utmost to survive. In part then, the fables reflect aspects of the natural world while, at other times, animals are endowed with qualities and characteristics that are unnatural.[14] In particular, animals are sometimes endowed with human characteristics such as speech and they can mirror human behaviour, such as hosting dinner parties (B106) and pursuing lawsuits (B102). In this way, differences between certain animal characters in terms of power, strength, status and intelligence can be read as signifying differences that exist between different categories of humans. The lion, by way of example, is portrayed as a 'natural' enemy of the deer (B90) but he is also a metaphor for the human leader or king who has great power and status (B102). The deer, in turn, is the king's human subject: he is weak, timid, and gullible (B95). By portraying conflict between these two types as natural and inevitable, the fables portray conflict between different categories of humans as natural and inevitable. This includes conflict between the powerful versus powerless, strong versus weak, and intelligent versus stupid.

[14] For a discussion of unnatural behaviour in Aesopic fables in general see Duda 1948: 4-13.

Although conflict is portrayed as an inescapable part of life, the fables also indicate that the form that conflict takes and its outcomes are by no means certain. There are plenty of fables in which stronger and larger animals prevail, for example, a lion killing a bull (B44), a wolf devouring a lamb (B89) or a dog catching a hare (B87), but there are also unexpected outcomes. Lions, for example, are usually portrayed as superior in intelligence, power and status but some of the fables portray lions that are frail from old age, frightened by hunters, or victims of love.[15] Similarly, the mouse is usually cast as a victim because he is small and timid but, in two of the fables, a mouse manages to save a lion's life (B107) and to torment a bull (B112). Unexpected outcomes occur when 'human' characteristics are assigned to weak animal characters. The faculty of speech and the deft use of cunning or persuasion are typical examples of characteristics that give weak characters an atypical advantage.

All of these aspects can be observed in other ancient fable collections but there is one important feature of Babrius' collection that is particularly distinctive. It is Babrius' tendency to depict the inner psychological state and emotion that is being experienced by a character regardless of that character's position in the hierarchy. Unlike the straightforward win/lose attitude to conflict that is depicted in the *Augustana* fables, the Babrian fables explore the emotions that accompany conflict: emotions such as anger and fear. Babrius portrays how these emotions affect the inner psychological state of the characters, such as the lion delighting in a win or the wolf feeling betrayed because of a loss. Winners are portrayed revelling in their victories and they may express this by rebuking, mocking, laughing at, or humiliating their prey.[16] The losers, in contrast, feel sorrow about their defeat, recognise that a fatal error was made,[17] or regret a

[15] See B1, B95, B98 and B103.

[16] See B9 and B105.

[17] In B122, for example, a wolf regrets helping to remove a thorn from an ass's hoof.

particular course of action.[18] In B105, for example, the wolf is described as 'crying out loudly' (ἐκεκράγει: line 4) because the lion has stolen its sheep. The lion is described as 'enjoying' himself (τερφθείς: line 5) and he makes fun of the wolf (σκώπτων: line 5). This emphasis on the emotional state of the characters in the Babrian fables will be discussed further in our comparison of the different fable collections.[19]

Apart from conflicts in which survival is the main goal, there are also fables that portray formal contests. Unlike the conflicts that take place between predators and prey, these contests take place between characters of similar status, type and ability. Examples include the contest between the Sun and the North Wind (B18); the Athenian and the Theban (B15); Zeus, Poseidon and Athena (B59); the Fir Tree and the Bramble (B64); the Crane and Peacock (B65) and the Snake's Head and Tail (B134). Fables about competitions follow a fixed formula. First, one or both parties claims to be superior in some skill or faculty and a competition is arranged in order to test the claim. The Sun and the North Wind compete in B18, for example, to see which has more influence. The contest may be organised in a formal or informal manner. Some contests arise spontaneously,[20] while other competitions are formally presided over by a judge.[21] These formal competitions appear to serve as metaphors for various types of competitions that take place in the human realm, including athletic contests, rhetorical debates, and competitions in the creative arts. Examples include B15, in which an Athenian is said to be a more fluent speaker than a Theban (στωμύλος ... ῥήτωρ: line 10). Athletic and sporting contests involve sports like archery (B68), craftsmanship (B59), and acts involving physical exertion (B18, B41 and B134). Like the other fables depicting conflict,

[18] In B129, for example, the ass regrets that it tried to imitate the dog.
[19] The emotion-terms that appear frequently in the fables are discussed in detail below in Chapter Six.
[20] B15, B18, B64, B65 and B134.
[21] B59 and B68.

competition is portrayed as a natural part of life. Unlike the fables about 'natural' conflicts, however, these competition fables show less interest in the psychological and emotional states of the characters. The outcomes of these contests are clear and straightforward because there is a clear winner, for example, when Zeus beats Apollo in the archery contest in B68 and the Sun defeats the North Wind by encouraging the man to remove his cloak in B18.

II. Survival

Matters of survival are paramount in the conflict-riddled world of the fables. While all mortal and fallible characters are portrayed as possessing an instinct to survive, their success varies greatly depending on their skills, situation and intelligence. Superiority of strength, speed and power can be advantageous but intelligence and cunning are even more valuable. The fables portray methods of survival that succeed as well as those that do not. Not surprisingly, the survival tactics for those at the top and bottom of the hierarchy are quite different.

The struggle to survive affects characters at all levels of the hierarchy. In this way, the Babrian fables suggest that superior power, status and wealth do not necessarily guarantee survival. Those at the top of the hierarchy have to ensure their survival by continually watching out for their position. The lion in B1, for example, could have lost its life had it not foreseen and accurately judged the degree of risk involved in confronting a hunter. In contrast, the lion in B95 is not suspicious enough of its 'friend', the fox, and it foregoes part of its catch. At other times, the fables demonstrate that those at the top of the hierarchy are better equipped to withstand attacks, and they can use brute force to overcome their victims. In B105, the lion's strength and power are so superior to that of the wolf that the lion is not at all troubled by the wolf's protests about stealing its sheep. Similarly, in B67, a lion teams up with a wild ass in order to engage in

a hunt.[22] The lion then shamelessly claims the ass's portion of the catch and threatens the ass if it complains. These fables suggest that individuals with power, strength and status can behave in a ruthless fashion and that, in these circumstances, there is little choice for those lower down but to accept the consequences.[23]

Predators such as wolves, lions, men and foxes use cunning to try and secure food, particularly when they are disadvantaged by their old age,[24] their size or number,[25] or because their prey is difficult to obtain.[26] The usual strategy is to pretend that they are friends, rather than enemies, of their prey. For example, in B132, a wolf pretends that it is concerned that a sheep will be sacrificed in an attempt to lure the sheep out of its fold. In B103, a lion pretends that he is sick so that the other animals will visit him in his lair and, in B95, a fox pretends to be a friendly adviser to a deer. The results of these cunning plots are mixed. Sometimes, a predator succeeds and manages to secure his prey,[27] while, at other times, the prey recognises the attempt at deception and manages to escape.[28]

Persuasion plays a major role in plots to secure food. The fox is the arch-persuader and his skill is clearly demonstrated in B95. In this fable, the fox manages to persuade a deer to endanger its life not once but twice. Other attempts at persuasion are less successful. In B132, the wolf fails to persuade the sheep to come out of its fold. The sheep refuses to leave, saying that it would prefer to be sacrificed than be a meal for a wolf. In B9, a fisherman tries to

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[22] The wild ass helps the lion to hunt because it is swift-footed not because it is carnivorous (see Duda 1948: 114-116).

[23] At the same time, as Morgan notes, the powerful cannot always behave as they please in the fables (Morgan 2007: 64).

[24] In B103, a lion has grown too old to hunt and instead tries to trick animals into entering his lair.

[25] B44, B95 and B97.

[26] B33, B77, B93, B115 and B132.

[27] B33, B44, B77, B95 and B115.

[28] B97, B103 and B132.

persuade some fish to come out of the water by playing music to them. When his efforts are unsuccessful, he takes up a net and catches a great number of fish. This fable demonstrates that if persuasion fails, more direct methods are successful.[29]

Predators sometimes attempt to trap or deceive their prey but this method is not often successful. In B1, for example, a fox tries to deceive a lion by encouraging it to confront a hunter. The lion recognises the fox's motive and refuses. In B17, a cat tries to ambush some hens by hiding in a bag. A wise cock recognises the cat and ridicules its disguise saying: "I have seen many bags already and I know from experience that none had the animal teeth of a cat" ("πολλοὺς μὲν οἶδα θυλάκους ἰδὼν ἤδη· / οὐδεὶς δ' ὀδόντας ζῶντος εἶχεν αἰλούρου": lines 5–6).[30] Other methods of securing property include stealing (as the dog steals the meat from the butcher in B79) and cheating others of their rightful entitlement (like the groom who sells his horse's fodder in B83). In rare cases, those with superior strength are prepared to suffer a temporary indignity if they know that they will be able to avenge the insult at a later time. This is the situation of the bull in B91 that hides from a lion in a seemingly deserted cave. The bull is confronted by an unfriendly goat that is also sheltering in the cave. Nonetheless, the bull is prepared to tolerate the goat's aggression while it waits for the lion to pass by.

For those at the bottom of the hierarchy, survival is difficult but not impossible. The most practical and feasible options are to flee from the danger, to remain inconspicuous, to try to alleviate or improve the situation, to submit, or to unite with others. The best chance of survival lies in avoiding conflict altogether or

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[29] This fable was allegedly told by Cyrus to some Ionian and Aeolian envoys who were too slow to respond to Cyrus' demands: Hdt. 1.141.1-2. For a discussion of this fable and its political context see van Dijk 1997: 270-274.

[30] Luzzatto and La Penna have οὗτος instead of ζῶντος (B17.6). I have followed Vaio's suggestion to read ζῶντος because οὐδεὶς οὗτος would be erroneous (see Vaio 2001: 41-42).

using one's cunning and intelligence. Interestingly, scholars have interpreted fables that depict characters fleeing from danger as advocating conformity and timidity in the face of those who are more powerful.[31] In the Babrian fables, avoiding conflict is not necessarily presented as cowardly or submissive. It is portrayed as an entirely legitimate, intelligent and pro-active response to an imminent threat against one's life. As a result, characters are not ridiculed, regardless of the type of creature they are, for fleeing from danger. This applies to a wide variety of scenarios including cranes flying away from a farmer (B26), hares running from dogs (B69), and bulls fleeing from lions (B97). A rare instance in which a character is ridiculed for running away from danger is B1 but, in this case, the ridicule of the lion conceals an ulterior motive (that is, the fox wants the lion to confront the hunter so that the lion will be killed). The fact that characters that flee from danger survive suggests that running away is one of the most sensible and effective methods of survival. In B67, for example, a wild ass is given an ultimatum: either he demands his share of the bargain and risks being killed or he runs away. In B69, a dog that is chasing a hare observes that fear of death makes the hare run faster and that this, in turn, makes the hare difficult to catch. The dog says: "Someone runs quickly in order to catch another, but it is different to running away in order to save oneself from harm" ("ἄλλως ἄλλον ἁρπάσαι σπεύδων / τρέχει τις, ἄλλως δ' αὑτὸν ἐκ κακοῦ σῴζων": lines 5–6).

Inconspicuousness can also aid survival. In B4, for example, the little fishes that are caught by a fisherman manage to slip out of the holes in the net, while the big fish remain caught. Similarly, in B112, a mouse bites a bull and avoids being attacked by its sharp horns because it retreats into its tiny hole. Conversely, individuals that make themselves conspicuous invite danger. In B72, for example, a jackdaw that draws attention to itself by dressing in the feathers of the other birds is viciously attacked and revealed to be a humble jackdaw. In

[31] Zafiropoulos 2001: 53.

B135, a partridge that has recently been brought into a house makes its presence known by flapping about and squawking loudly. As a result, it attracts the attention of a cat that threatens to become its enemy. In B31, there is a description of a war between the mice and the weasels. The generals of the mice wear elaborate headgear that prevents them from retreating back into their holes and, as a consequence, they are attacked and killed. In contrast, the ordinary ranks of mice survive.

In some circumstances, hiding or fleeing from danger is not an option. In such cases, the potential victims will try to improve or alleviate their perilous situation by requesting that their fate be decided more quickly, appealing for assistance, or asking to be left alone. In B51, for example, a sheep asks a widow to deliver him to a butcher or barber rather than torturing him by trying to shear off more wool than he has. In B23, a cattle-driver looking for his bull prays to the gods to help him evade a lion's notice and, in B121, a sick hen tells a cat that it will recover more quickly if it is left alone. Honesty can also ensure one's survival if honesty is demanded by one's captor. In B53, for example, an old fox meets with a wolf that threatens to kill it. The wolf says that it will spare the fox's life if the fox tells it three true statements. The fox says that it wishes it had never met the wolf, that the wolf was blind, and that the wolf will not live another year. In fables such as these, no clear indication is given as to whether the potential victim survives. Even so, the fact that the request or statement constitutes the final sentence of the narrative gives that sentence a certain emphasis and implies that there was no negative consequence, opposition or counter-argument.

Submission is less common but it is nonetheless presented as an option. An example is B36 which describes an oak tree that is uprooted by the wind and swept into a river. The oak tree is astonished to see that the reeds on the river

bank have not been affected by the storm. In response, a reed says (at lines 9–12):

...] "μηδὲν ἐκπλήσσου.
σὺ μὲν μαχομένη ταῖς πνοαῖς ἐνικήθης,
ἡμεῖς δὲ καμπτόμεσθα μαλθακῇ γνώμῃ,
κἂν βαιὸν ἡμῶν ἄνεμος ἄκρα κινήσῃ."[32]

Another survival tactic is to unite forces as a group. An example of this is B47 in which a man demonstrates to his three sons that three rods that are tightly bound together are more difficult to break than a single rod.

Supplication rarely succeeds although it is not uncommon for it to be portrayed in the fables. The verb ἱκετεύω appears on ten occasions in the collection[33] and the noun ἱκέτης appears once (B107.9). Animals that occupy an elevated position in the food chain such as lions are never portrayed as suppliants. The characters that supplicate in the fables all suffer from some disadvantage that relates either to size (such as fish, mice and grasshoppers), kind (such as storks and partridges), age (such as the old fox that begs the wolf for its life in B53) or social status (such as slave-girls and goatherds). In B6, for example, a little fish begs a fisherman to unhook it and throw it back into the sea and, in B107, a mouse begs a lion to release it from its grasp and allow it to live.

In the course of begging for their lives, suppliants rely on one of three arguments: their lack of personal culpability (which focuses on events in the past), insufficient gain for their captor (which focuses on the present circumstances) and the prospect of negative consequences for their captor (which focuses on future consequences). An example of the first type is B3, in which a goatherd begs a goat not to reveal the fact that he threw a stone at it and broke its horn. The goatherd argues that he did not intend to hit the goat. An example of the second type is B107, in which a mouse claims that it is not

[32] ["Don't be so astounded. You fought the winds and were defeated but we bend down with a pliant mind, even if the wind stirs our tops a little."]
[33] B3.6, B6.5, B6.13, B10.8, B13.3, B107.3, B124.6, B134.14, B138.3 and B140.3.

big enough to constitute a meal for a lion. An example of the third type is B124, in which a cockerel claims that it will be missed for its morning wake-up call and that its captor has not considered the consequences of his actions.[34] The only fable in which there is an act of supplication that is not based on one of these three arguments is the grasshopper begging the ant for food in B140.

Some of the arguments that are put forward by suppliants represent quite elaborate attempts at rhetorical persuasion. In B6, for example, the little fish says (at lines 6–12):

> "τί σοι τὸ κέρδος; ἢ πόσου με πωλήσεις;
> οὐκ εἰμὶ γὰρ τέλειος, ἀλλά με πρῴην
> πρὸς τῇδε πέτρῃ φυκὶς ἔπτυσεν μήτηρ.
> νῦν οὖν ἄφες με, μὴ μάτην μ' ἀποκτείνῃς.
> ἐπὴν δὲ πλησθεὶς φυκίων θαλασσαίων
> μέγας γένωμαι, πλουσίοις πρέπων δείπνοις,
> τότ' ἐνθάδ' ἐλθὼν ὕστερόν με συλλήψῃ."[35]

The little fish argues that he represents an insufficient gain for his captor. At the same time, he appeals to the man's sense of greed and foolishness by suggesting that the man could get a larger gain in the future and that the fisherman will be able to catch him again. In presenting his escape plan as persuasively as he can, the little fish demonstrates cunning and intelligence.

In spite of the elaborate efforts at persuasion that are made, the fables demonstrate that supplication is generally ineffective. The little fish in B6 is killed, as is the stork in B13, the cockerel in B124, and the partridge in B138. In

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[34] Similar arguments are made by a partridge in B138 when it promises to catch many other partridges in its place; and a mouse in B107 that claims that it might one day be in a position to repay the lion's mercy.

[35] ["What is the gain to you? How much will you sell me for? I am not fully grown. Not long ago, my mother, a wrasse, spat me out near the rock. So now, let me go, do not kill me in vain. When I am big, having eaten seaweed from the sea, I will be fit for a grand dinner. Then coming here you will catch me later."] The use of the verb πτύω, lit. 'to spit out' is curious in this passage. According to Thompson, the φυκὶς or wrasse lays its spawn in a nest of seaweed and it is the male that watches over the eggs. This contradicts two details in Babrius' account, despite the fact that the habits of the wrasse were known in the ancient world (see Thompson 1947: 276-278). Perhaps Babrius was unfamiliar with the habits of this Mediterranean fish, or perhaps the verb could be translated more loosely as 'cast out'.

the other fables, the outcomes are equally dire: the grasshopper is destined to starve to death in B140 and the goatherd in B3 cannot hide his deed and will undoubtedly be punished. In spite of the fact that, for the most part, captors show no mercy toward their suppliants,[36] captors do explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Captors rebut the various arguments that are put to them by stating that the gain is sufficient (B6), that the suppliant is in fact culpable (B3 and B13), or that practical necessity prevails (B124). The fisherman in B6, for example, is indifferent to the pleas of the little fish and he spears it with a sharp stick. At that moment, he says: "He who does not take heed of small things that are guaranteed is foolish, besides seeking after those things which are uncertain." ("ὁ μὴ τὰ μικρά, πλὴν βέβαια, τηρήσας / μάταιός ἐστιν, ἢν ἄδηλα θηρεύῃ": lines 16-17). The fisherman is unaffected by the promise of a larger benefit in the future. He has weighed up his chances and he is content with the present benefits that are already within his grasp.

There are only two fables in the collection in which supplication is successful (B107 and B124). The mouse in B107 appears to be successful because it amuses its captor (a lion). The mouse suggests that one day it might repay the lion if it shows mercy and the lion is amused by this notion. The partridge in B124 appears to survive (although the cockerel does not) because it maintains that it is a useful decoy and that it can help attract flocks of birds. Together, these two fables suggest that supplication will only succeed if a suppliant can amuse his/her captor or if the suppliant promises to contribute to his/her captor's well-being in the future.

Reviewing our findings then, it appears that the view that the fables encourage submission and 'meekness' is incorrect. In fact, the fables portray a diverse range of survival tactics and lessons for living a skilful life. Practical efforts such

[36] Mercy, I suggest, is not recommended in the Babrian fables. In B143, for example, an act of mercy leads directly to a man's death.

as asking for one's situation to be changed or for one's fate to be decided more quickly are more common than passivity and submission. Behaviours that have been interpreted as cowardly and submissive such as fleeing from danger or trying to be inconspicuous are actually presented as intelligent and, for the most part, successful. At the same time, it is interesting that supplication is rarely successful. Even though a captor will explain why he/she does not accept a suppliant's arguments, suppliants are usually put to death. The only exception is when a suppliant charms or otherwise persuades his/her captor. In this way, the fables reinforce the notion that skills in persuasion and rhetoric are critical for survival.

III. Suffering

The verbs that are used by Babrius to indicate suffering are πάσχω,[37] μοχθέω[38] and κάμνω.[39] The types of animals that routinely suffer in the fables are those that are used for labour and transport, such as the ass, horse and ox.[40] For these animals, suffering is an inevitable part of life. Furthermore, the manner in which these animals are depicted in the fables is largely consistent with the way in which these animals were used in ancient Roman society. As Gilhus has observed:

> The inhabitants of the Roman Empire were completely dependent on an animal labour force. For instance, animals worked in the fields, they pulled carts and chariots, and served as mounts and beasts of burden. Oxen were used for ploughing, donkeys worked the millstones and the wheels that were used to draw water from wells, mules and oxen pulled wagons, and horses served in war.[41]

Although other types of animals are also occasionally portrayed as suffering, their suffering is short-lived rather than ongoing. In B122, for example, a wolf suffers when it is kicked in the head by an ass. In B38, a fir tree suffers because

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[37] B24.7, B38.10, B47.14, B94.10, B122.14, B131.3 and B143.6.

[38] B74.13 and B111.10. The noun μόχθος appears once in B37.3.

[39] B7.3, B9.5, B9.12, B19.6, B37.2, B50.2, B52.8, B74.2, B95.94 and B103.3.

[40] See B7, B29, B37, B52, B76, B111, B129 and B141.

[41] Gilhus 2006: 14.

it recognises that it is being felled with the help of its own children, and in B19 and B95.43–44, a fox suffers because it is weary of being unsuccessful in obtaining food.

There are three different attitudes toward suffering that are depicted in the fables, represented by the ass, horse and ox respectively. The ass tries to alleviate his suffering by asking others for help, by trying to ease his burden or by trying to engage in the more pleasant pursuits that others enjoy. In B7, for example, an old ass asks a horse to help carry some of its burden. The horse refuses and the ass ultimately dies from exhaustion and relentless toil. In B111, an ass discovers that it can dissolve some of its heavy burden of salt by dipping into a stream. In B129, the ass tires of its life of constant toil and tries to imitate the behaviour of the little dog, with disastrous results.[42]

The horse suffers in old age when his good form has declined. He regrets the loss of his youth and former station.[43] In B29, for example, an old race horse is yoked to a mill where he grinds corn throughout the night. He expresses his suffering by groaning (στενάξας: line 3) and expressing the irony of his situation when he says "From running round the marking point I run laps in circles for barley-groats" ("ἐκ δρόμων οἵων / καμπτῆρας οἵους ἀλφίτοισι γυρεύω": lines 3–4).[44] Similarly, B76 describes a horse that was well cared for as a warhorse. After the war ends, the owner uses the horse to haul logs and carry heavy loads. When war breaks out again, the owner prepares the horse for battle. The horse does not even have the strength to stand and it says (at lines 17–19):

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[42] For a discussion of the other characteristics of the ass, such as the ass's docile nature, his usefulness to mankind and his diet, see Duda 1948: 113-116.

[43] In B74.11, for example, the horse is said to represent man in the early period of his life when he is 'haughty in spirit' (γαῦρός ... τὴν γνώμην).

[44] Luzzatto and La Penna have ἀλφιτεῦσι instead of ἀλφίτοισι (B29.4). I have followed Vaio's suggestion to restore ἀλφίτοισι because it more clearly indicates the sad irony of the horse's fate (see Vaio 2001: 57-58).

"ἔντασσε πεζοῖς σαυτόν" εἶπεν "ὁπλίταις·
σὺ γάρ μ' ἀφ' ἵππων εἰς ὄνους μεταστήσας
πῶς αὖθις ἵππον ἐξ ὄνου με ποιήσεις;"[45]

The ox has, for the most part, a noble and courageous attitude toward suffering. He is not inclined to complain, to feel sorry for himself, or to try to alleviate his anguish. In B74.12–13, for example, the ox is said to represent man in middle age: toiling constantly, fond of work and determined to gather wealth. In B52, a pair of oxen is dragging a heavy cart into town. The cart creaks and complains but the hard-working oxen remain silent. In B21, some oxen devise a plan to kill the butchers, since they are the enemies of the oxen by profession. As they are preparing for the upcoming battle, an old ox says to them (at lines 6–10):

"οὗτοι μὲν ἡμᾶς" εἶπε "χερσὶν ἐμπείροις
σφάζουσι καὶ κτείνουσι χωρὶς αἰκείης·
ἢν δ' εἰς ἀτέχνους ἐμπέσωμεν ἀνθρώπους,
διπλοῦς τότ' ἔσται θάνατος. οὐ γὰρ ἐλλείψει
τὸν βοῦν ὁ θύσων, κἂν μάγειρος ἐλλείψῃ."[46]

The old ox warns the others against the plan and points out that the suffering of the present is preferable to the potential of even greater suffering in the future.

Other creatures in the fables view suffering as undesirable and try to avoid it. In B24, for example, a toad warns some frogs about the likelihood of suffering if the sun fathers a child and, in B94, a wolf advises a crane that it will avoid suffering if it is content with its gain. It is unusual for a character to accept that he/she may have played a role in causing his/her own suffering. One of the few examples is B38, in which some wood cutters use wooden wedges in order to split a fir tree apart. The fir tree reacts as follows (at lines 4–7):

πεύκη στένουσα "πῶς ἄν" εἶπε "μεμφοίμην
τὸν πέλεκυν, ὅς μου μὴ προσῆκε τῇ ῥίζῃ,
ὡς τοὺς κακίστους σφῆνας, ὧν ἐγὼ μήτηρ;
ἄλλος γὰρ ἄλλῃ μ' ἐμπεσὼν διαρρήσσει."[47]

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[45] ["Enrol yourself in the foot-soldiers. You turned me from horse to donkey, so how will you make me a horse again from a donkey?"]

[46] ["These men slaughter and kill us with experienced hands, without violence. If we encounter inexperienced men, then our deaths will be twofold. For the man sacrificing the ox won't fail, even if as a butcher he fails."]

The fable suggests that one must assume responsibility for suffering that is caused by one's own children, a fact that the fir tree recognises with some anguish. Another example is B122 in which a wolf admits that he suffers a just punishment because he foolishly tried to help an ass with a thorn in its hoof.

Characters that witness the suffering of others express a range of reactions from indifference to pity. The horse is indifferent to the suffering of the ass in B7 but it pays a heavy price for this indifference. When the ass dies of exhaustion because the horse refuses to accept part of the ass's burden, a man puts the ass's load onto the horse as well as the ass's skin which he has flayed. The horse says (at lines 14–16):

> ...] "οἴμοι τῆς κακῆς" ἔφη "γνώμης·
> οὗ γὰρ μετασχεῖν μικρὸν οὐκ ἐβουλήθην,
> <τοῦτ'> αὖτ' ἐμοὶ πᾶν ἐπιτέθεικεν ἡ χρείη."[48]

The fable suggests that indifference to the suffering of others is imprudent and can lead to an even greater burden being put on oneself. In B52, the ox-herd is not indifferent to the suffering of his oxen since he criticises his cart for creaking and complaining while the hardworking oxen shoulder the burden. In B111, the merchant deliberately exacerbates the ass's suffering when he learns that the ass tried to lighten its load. In other fables, suffering leads to death,[49] physical injury[50] and physical exhaustion.[51] It is rare for suffering to result in reward.[52]

We have seen that the fables portray suffering as inevitable for certain categories of animal, which suggests in turn that suffering was regarded as inevitable for certain categories of man, particularly those who performed hard

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[47] [Moaning, the fir tree said "How could I blame the axe which did not set upon my root, in comparison with the evil wedges of which I am the mother? For each one plunging into a different place will split me apart."]

[48] ["Oh dear!" he said, "What bad judgment I showed. Necessity has loaded everything onto me because I didn't want to share in a small part of this."]

[49] The ass dies in B7, the fir tree is felled in B38 and the ass is beaten to death in B129.

[50] B122.

[51] B29, B76 and B111.

[52] An example may be B37, when the old bull, after ploughing the field, is unyoked and turned out to pasture.

physical work such as labourers, slaves, and farmers.[53] There are three different attitudes to toil and suffering: the desire to ease one's suffering (the ass), regret about one's suffering (the horse) and acceptance of suffering (the ox). The last option is portrayed as the most intelligent attitude to adopt because it avoids the risk of humiliation that is associated with trying to imitate others (as the ass does) and the negativity that is associated with regret and looking back to the past (as in the case of the horse). At the same time, complete indifference to the suffering of others is perilous because there is always the possibility that the burden of that person's suffering may one day be transferred to oneself. Suffering is presented as an inevitable and inescapable part of life. The fables do not condemn suffering but they also do not gloss over the seriousness of suffering and its physical, mental and emotional cost.

IV. Comparison with other fable collections

The preceding discussion enables us to compare the themes in Babrius' collection with those in the *Augustana* and the fables of Phaedrus. The *Augustana* is the oldest extant collection of Greek fables in full form.[54] It is a useful collection to compare with Babrius' because of its length and because the themes of the *Augustana* have been explored by others in some detail.[55] I will also compare Babrius' fables with the aforementioned fables of Phaedrus. This collection, dating from the early first century CE, is close in time to Babrius' fables and represents a useful point of comparison for this reason.

As in the Babrian fables, conflict is a significant feature of the *Augustana* in terms of theme, content and the way in which some of the fables are

[53] As Gilhus notes, the division between humans and animals in relation to physical labour was not absolute in Roman society. Poor people and slaves frequently performed the same sort of work as working animals (Gilhus 2006: 14).
[54] Zafiropoulos 2001: 23.
[55] See Zafiropoulos 2001: 45-80.

structured.[56] Both collections contain agonistic fables which follow a traditional narrative structure that presents an issue in dispute, a conflict and a resolution, although the Babrian collection has a smaller number of agonistic fables than the *Augustana*.[57] In some cases, both collections contain versions of the same agonistic fable. This allows us to compare the two versions and examine important differences in the presentation of the theme of conflict.[58]

One important difference between the collections is that the Babrian fables sometimes avoid presenting direct competition or portray it in a less violent manner than the *Augustana*. In B36 (discussed above), for example, we recall that Babrius describes how a large oak is uprooted by a strong wind and blown into a river. The oak is astonished to see that some reeds by the river bank have survived the storm. A wise reed explains to the oak tree that they survived by yielding and bending with the wind. In the *Augustana* version of the same fable (P70), the oak and the reed are engaged in a competitive debate about their respective levels of strength. The debate is violently and conclusively resolved when the oak tree is uprooted by the strong wind but the reeds survive. Similarly, in B59, Babrius tells a fable about a contest between Zeus, Poseidon and Athena to create the most beautiful object. Momus is selected to act as judge but he finds fault with all of their creations. The fable ends with Momus' critique of each object. The *Augustana* version of the same fable (P100) describes the same contest but it adds a description of Zeus losing his temper with

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[56] Zafiropoulos 2001: 48.

[57] Zafiropoulos identifies eighteen agonistic fables in the *Augustana* that commence with the same formulaic statement (Zafiropoulos 2001: 48, fn. 9). This amounts to 7.8% of the entire collection. I have identified seven agonistic fables in Babrius' collection (B15, B18, B39, B64, B65, B68 and B134). This amounts to 4.8% of the entire collection.

[58] The following agonistic fables in the *Augustana* do not have equivalents in the Babrian collection: P12, P20, P90, P130, P147, P197, P213, P220, P222, P223, P226 and P229. The following agonistic fables in the Babrian collection do not appear to have equivalents in the *Augustana*: B15, B64, B65 and B134.

Momus and hurling him from Olympus. The Babrian version shies away from describing Momus' violent punishment.[59]

A further difference is that Babrius is more interested in portraying the effects of competition on the emotions of the characters. A clear example of this is B129 (discussed above), in which the ass tries to compete with the dog for the attention and affection of their master. The attempt fails and the ass is beaten. Babrius uses direct speech to portray how this affects the emotional outlook of the ass. We recall that the ass is described as saying (at lines 23–25):

> "ἔτλην" ἔλεξεν "οἷα χρή με, δυσδαίμων·
> τί γὰρ παρ' οὐρήεσσιν οὐκ ἐπωλεύμην,
> βαιῷ δ' ὁ μέλεος κυνιδίῳ παρισούμην;"[60]

This speech conveys emotions of distress, regret and self-blame. The *Augustana* version of the same fable (P91) does not describe the reaction of the ass to its punishment nor does it give as much insight into the emotions and inner state of the protagonist in the remainder of the narrative.

A third difference between the Babrian and *Augustana* collections is their attitude towards the powerful. The Babrian fables recognise that the powerful have to find ways to maintain their position since the abuse of power can lead to disaster and cunning and persuasion do not always guarantee success. The *Augustana* fables represent a more negative view of power because they focus on presenting the ruthlessness and brutality of the powerful. An example is the fable about the wolves and sheep in which some wolves approach a flock of sheep and offer to make a treaty of peace if the sheep surrender their guard dogs for punishment. In the Babrian version (B93), the wolves do not succeed with their plan because an old ram warns the sheep not to agree to the terms of

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[59] Another example is B68, which describes Zeus 'jesting' with Apollo by engaging in an archery contest, and P104, which presents the archery competition as a more serious contest. Examples in which the description of the competition is basically the same include B18 and P46; B39 and P62; and B31 and P165.

[60] [He said "I suffered what is necessary for me, unlucky fellow. Why didn't I get sold along with the mules, instead of vying, wretch that I am, with a little dog?"]

the treaty. In the *Augustana* version (P153), the sheep do not foresee the risk and they surrender the dogs. The wolves then mercilessly kill the entire flock.

Greater similarities exist between the Babrian fables and the *Augustana* in relation to the theme of survival. This again contradicts the view that Babrius advocates submission and meekness to a greater degree than other fable writers.[61] Both the Babrian and *Augustana* fables emphasise that survival is critically important and they both place a high value on life.[62] The general position of both collections is that the weak should avoid conflict with the strong. Both fable collections portray those at the top of the hierarchy as superior and illustrate that for those at the bottom conflict is futile and alternative survival strategies should be devised. Both collections suggest that craftiness and attempts at persuasion are better strategies than direct conflict or violence.[63]

There are, in fact, three fables in which the Babrian version portrays harsher attitudes than the *Augustana* version. In B140, for example, the ant refuses to give food to the starving grasshopper. It laughs at the grasshopper's request and tells it to dance all winter since it spent its time singing all summer. In the *Augustana* version (P112), the ant also refuses to give food to the grasshopper but it has a more reasonable motive for not doing so, since the grasshopper had previously ridiculed the ant for its habit of hoarding food. A further example is B91, in which a bull threatens that it will take revenge on a goat for attacking it. In the *Augustana* version (P217), no such threat is made even though it is an entire herd of goats that viciously attacks the bull. In addition, there is the fable about a goatherd who finds a herd of wild goats and tries to encourage them to join his herd by feeding the wild ones and letting his own go hungry. In the Babrian version (B45), the goatherd loses both herds because one herd dies and

[61] Nøjgaard 1967: 354.
[62] Zafiropoulos 2001: 53-54.
[63] Zafiropoulos 2001: 55-56.

the other runs away. In the *Augustana* version (P6), the herdsman does not succeed in luring the wild goats but he at least manages to retain his original herd.

When we compare the theme of suffering in both collections, it becomes apparent that Babrius 'amplifies' the suffering of his protagonists. In B7, for example, Babrius vividly describes the suffering of an old ass as it struggles to carry a heavy load while a horse is being led alongside it free of any burden. In the *Augustana* version (P181), the animals are an ass and a mule and both animals are carrying burdens. The ass has no trouble carrying the load when the road is level and only asks for help when the road becomes steep. A further example is the fable about the widow and her sheep. In the Babrian version (B51), a poor widow shears a sheep close to its flesh, presumably so that she can obtain more wool. In doing so, she draws blood from the animal and causes it to suffer. In the *Augustana* version (P212), the shearer simply shears the sheep 'clumsily' (ἀφυῶς: line 1). Babrius' version more vividly describes the suffering of the protagonist thereby encouraging more sympathy for the protagonist's situation and heightening the pathos of the needy widow.

Comparison with Phaedrus

The differences between the fables of Babrius and Phaedrus are profound. In particular, Phaedrus presents the themes of conflict, suffering and survival in a more exaggerated and pointed manner than Babrius. Rodríguez Adrados describes the reasons for Phaedrus' approach when he says:

> the root of [Phaedrus'] fabulizing lies in the satirical and moral intention against the powerful and, more specifically, against Sejanus.[64] Phaedrus used more or less altered traditional fables to this end, as we have seen: with a more lively, more rhetorical, more piercing composition.[65]

[64] For Phaedrus' cryptic remarks about Sejanus see the prologue to book 3, lines 41-44.
[65] Rodríguez Adrados 2000: 173.

In order to illustrate these differences more precisely, I will examine some of the fables that are found in both Babrius' and Phaedrus' collections.

In portraying conflict, Babrius' fables are less brutal and violent than those of Phaedrus. In the fable about the wolf and lamb, for example, a wolf tries to find a reason to kill an innocent lamb. Babrius' version (B89) describes the wolf as follows (lines 1–3):

> Λύκος ποτ' ἄρνα πεπλανημένον ποίμνης
> ἰδὼν βίῃ μὲν οὐκ ἐπῆλθεν ἁρπάξων,
> ἔγκλημα δ' ἔχθρης εὐπρόσωπον ἐζήτει.[66]

The wolf makes three accusations against the lamb and the lamb convincingly refutes each one. In spite of this, the wolf says that it is hungry and it eats the lamb anyway. In Phaedrus' version (Ph.1.1), the wolf is described as 'wicked' (*improbus*: line 3).[67] Phaedrus' wolf also accuses the lamb of wrongdoing but it gives way more readily to its appetite and it does not even allow the lamb to respond to the third accusation. It pounces on the lamb and attacks it. Phaedrus emphasises the injustice of the wolf's behaviour particularly in the closing lines of the fable (lines 12–15):

> *"Pater hercle tuus ille inquit male dixit mihi."*
> *Atque ita correptum lacerat iniusta nece.*
> *Haec propter illos scripta est homines fabula,*
> *Qui fictis causis innocentes opprimunt.*[68]

In this fable Phaedrus presents those who overwhelm the innocent with fake charges as violent and morally corrupt.[69] Babrius' version does not express the same negative judgement of the wolf. While Babrius' collection presents a variety of tactics that are available to the weak, Phaedrus suggests that it is

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[66] [Once, a wolf saw a lamb wandering away from a fold of sheep. It did not approach to seize it by force but looked for a plausible reason for its hostility.]

[67] For a discussion of Phaedrus' frequent use of this term see Morgan 2007: 79-80.

[68] ["Then it must be your father who meanly maligned me." And he pounced on his prey and tore him to pieces, indifferent to all equity and justice.] Translation from Widdows 1992: 5.

[69] For other examples of Phaedrus' negative view of power and authority see Ph.1.2, Ph.1.5, Ph.4.6, Ph.4.14 and Ph.4.24.

impossible for the weak to reason with, or persuade, those who are both wicked and powerful.[70]

A further difference is that Babrius does not focus on the victimisation of the weak as sharply as Phaedrus does. The fable of the eagle and the tortoise provides a clear example. In Babrius' version (B115), Babrius describes a tortoise that longs to be able to fly and accepts an eagle's offer to teach it. The eagle lifts the tortoise into the air and then drops the tortoise on the ground from a great height, thereby breaking its shell. The fable ends with a statement of regret from the tortoise. In Phaedrus' version (Ph.2.6), the tortoise does not want to fly. It has simply been captured by an eagle. The tortoise cowers inside its shell and is safe from the eagle until a crow intervenes and advises the eagle to drop the tortoise and smash its shell. It is only then that the tortoise is exposed and vulnerable to attack.[71] The fable ends with the following statement (lines 14–17):

> *Inducta verbis aquila, monitis paruit,*
> *Simul et magistrae large divisit dapem.*
> *Sic tuta quae naturae fuerat munere,*
> *Impar duabus occidit tristi nece.*[72]

In Babrius' version, the weak are portrayed as discontented with their lot and seeking some improvement in their situation but, in Phaedrus' version, the weak are victimised by the strong. Phaedrus demonstrates that the weak are eventually overcome by the combined might and intelligence of those who are more powerful in spite of their innate abilities to hide and protect themselves.[73] Babrius portrays suffering as a result of folly whereas Phaedrus portrays suffering as cruel and unnecessary.

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[70] Bloomer 1997: 87.

[71] On the significance of the intervention of the crow see Bloomer 1997: 90.

[72] [The eagle accepted this artful advice, and paid his tutor with a portion of the proceeds. Thus, the creature that nature had carefully created impregnable and invincible in its outward aspect, now outnumbered and outmanoeuvred, died a cruel and dreadful death.] Translation adapted from Widdows 1992: 46.

[73] See Ph.2.6, lines 1-3.

Phaedrus is also more inclined than Babrius to portray the weak as well-meaning and helpful. In B94, for example, Babrius describes a crane that agrees to remove a bone from a wolf's throat on the understanding that it will be paid a fee. After the crane removes the bone, the wolf grins and tells the crane that its reward is that it is still alive. In Phaedrus' version (Ph.1.8), more emphasis is placed on the risk that the bird takes in order to assist the wolf (lines 7–12):

Tandem persuasa est iure iurando gruis,
Gulaeque credens colli longitudinem,
Periculosam fecit medicinam lupo.
Pro quo cum pactum flagitaret praemium:
"Ingrata es" inquit "ore quae nostro caput
Incolume abstuleris et mercedem postules."[74]

In this fable, Phaedrus demonstrates his sympathy for those who do good deeds but are unable to demand proper consideration because they are in an inferior position of power.[75]

Contentment with lowly status is another theme that is more pronounced in Phaedrus' fables. In the fable of the jackdaw, for example, Iris announces a beauty contest for the birds. In Babrius' version (B72), a jackdaw adorns himself in the discarded feathers of other birds and is about to claim the prize from Zeus when he is viciously attacked by the other birds and revealed to be a fraud. In Phaedrus' version (Ph.1.3), added emphasis is placed on the ambition, pride and vanity of the jackdaw (lines 4–7):

Tumens inani graculus superbia,
Pennas, pavoni quae deciderant, sustulit
Seque exornavit. Deinde contemnens suos
Se immiscuit pavonum formoso gregi.[76]

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[74] [In the end the only animal to agree was the crane. Won over by an oath on his honor, she lunged into his gullet with her long neck and successfully performed the perilous operation. But when it came to her claiming the payment, the other answered, "You ungrateful creature! I had your head helpless in my mouth and let you withdraw it — and you want a reward!"] Translation from Widdows 1992: 13.

[75] Another example is Ph.1.5 in which a lion is helped in a hunt by a cow, she-goat and sheep but then refuses to share the plunder.

[76] [Swollen with self-importance, a stupid jackdaw put on some feathers that had fallen from a peacock and insinuated himself into the select circle of those brilliant birds, abandoning his brothers as beneath his notice.] Translation from Widdows 1992: 8.

Phaedrus describes the jackdaw as scorning its own kin. When it goes to join the peacocks, it is stripped of its feathers and attacked. Then, when it tries to return to its former companions, it meets with a verbal rebuke (lines 13–16):

> *"Contentus nostris si fuisses sedibus*
> *Et quod natura dederat voluisses pati,*
> *Nec illam expertus esses contumeliam*
> *Nec hanc repulsam tua sentiret calamitas."*[77]

Phaedrus' jackdaw suffers a triple punishment: attack by the peacocks, rejection by his kin and verbal abuse. While Babrius' jackdaw is physically attacked by the other birds so that its disguise is revealed, there is no suggestion that it is rejected by its own kind. Phaedrus' fable suggests that those who try to become something else risk humiliation and rejection by their own kind.

There is a greater degree of similarity between Babrius' and Phaedrus' treatment of the theme of suffering. In B141, for example, Babrius portrays the ongoing suffering of an ass, and this depiction is substantively the same as Phaedrus' version (Ph.4.1). Yet Phaedrus sometimes amplifies the suffering and hardship of the disadvantaged even more than Babrius does. In the fable of the wolf and dog, for example, Babrius describes a wolf that meets with a plump dog and enquires about its lifestyle (B100). In Phaedrus' version (Ph.3.7), the contrast between the physical conditions of the two animals is more pronounced. The wolf is described as emaciated with hunger while the dog is described as well-fed (lines 1–2). The lifestyle of the dog is also described in detail (lines 21–24):

> *"Affertur ultro panis; de mensa sua*
> *Dat ossa dominus; frusta iactat familia*
> *Et, quod fastidit quisque, pulmentarium.*
> *Sic sine labore venter impletur meus."*[78]

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[77] ["If you had stayed in the station assigned to you, accepting what Nature in her wisdom wanted, you'd have been uninjured — no insults from those others, and no ignominious expulsion from your own."] Translation from Widdows 1992: 8.

[78] ["I don't even beg, and they bring me bread; my master tosses me tidbits from his table, and the servants spoil me with surplus delicacies; without lifting a finger I feed my fill."] Translation from Widdows 1992: 63.

Phaedrus' description of the wolf's lifestyle establishes a sharp contrast (lines 11–14):

> *"Ego vero sum paratus: nunc patior nives*
> *Imbresque in silvis asperam vitam trahens:*
> *Quanto est facilius mihi sub tecto vivere,*
> *Et otiosum largo satiari cibo?"*[79]

When the wolf inquires as to the dog's neck being worn, the dog is reluctant to admit that it is tied up during the day. In both versions, the wolf decides that the cost of comfort is too high and it chooses to retain its freedom instead.

A final difference between the collections is that Phaedrus avoids ascribing any personal responsibility for suffering whereas Babrius allows a character to admit responsibility and learn from his/her mistakes. This can be observed in the fable about a man who takes pity on a snake (B143) which is as follows:

> Ἔχιν γεωργὸς ἐκπνέοντα τῷ ψύχει
> λαβὼν ἔθαλπεν· ὡς δ' ἐκεῖνος ἡπλώθη,
> τῇ χειρὶ προσφὺς καὶ δακὼν ἀνιήτως,
> ἔκτεινε τὸν σώσαντα †πικροῦ θανάτου†.
> θνήσκων δὲ μῦθον εἶπεν ἄξιον μνήμης·
> "δίκαια πάσχω τὸν πονηρὸν οἰκτείρας."[80]

Phaedrus' version (Ph.4.20) is as follows:

> *Qui fert malis auxilium post tempus dolet.*
> *Gelu rigentem quidam colubram sustulit*
> *Sinuque fovit contra se ipse misericors:*
> *Namque ut refecta est necuit hominem protinus.*
> *Hanc alia cum rogaret causam facinoris,*
> *Respondit: "Ne quis discat prodesse improbis."*[81]

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[79] ["Sounds splendid," said the wolf; "certainly at present the life I lead in these lonely woods is horribly hard, all hail and snow, rain and cold, with no crumb of comfort. What a boon it would be — a roof over me and enough food to fill me with no effort."] Translation from Widdows 1992: 63.

[80] [A farmer, taking up a snake that was breathing its last, warmed it. But as the snake lay there stretched out, it took hold of his hand and biting it fatally, it killed the one who saved him from a bitter death. Dying, the man spoke advice worth remembering: "I suffer justly for pitying the wicked."]

[81] [He who brings aid to the wicked afterwards suffers for it. A man saw a snake stiff from the cold and picked it up and put it, out of pity, against his body to restore its warmth. He was kind and compassionate to his own cost, for the snake was no sooner resuscitated than it bit him fatally. When another asked him why he did this, he replied: "To teach men not to be merciful to malicious creatures."] Translation adapted from Widdows 1992: 108.

In Phaedrus' version, the protagonist plays his part by picking up the snake without any judgments implied. The antagonist is presented as an evil villain who plays out his role ironically and justly. In contrast, the Babrian version presents the protagonist as admitting that lawful events flow from a flawed action.

V. Discussion

In comparison with the *Augustana,* Babrius' fables present less extreme examples of competitive behaviour and a more balanced view of the advantages and disadvantages of power. On the other hand, Babrius' fables portray suffering in a more vivid way and depict the effects of negative outcomes on the inner world of the characters in a more insightful way than the other two fable collections. In comparison with Phaedrus' collection, Babrius' fables place less emphasis on the brutality and violence of those in power. Phaedrus portrays the weak as innocent and well-meaning individuals who, in spite of their good intentions, fall prey to those who are powerful and morally corrupt. In the Babrian fables, as well as in the *Augustana,* there is a realistic acceptance of differences of power but also a desire to impart moral lessons that will help the weak to survive and to rely on skills and abilities other than strength, such as cunning and intelligence. These findings do not wholly agree with Nøjgaard's view that Babrius' fables advocate meekness as a general principle.[82]

To be sure, Babrius does not have the same personal and political agenda as Phaedrus, an agenda which results in a particularly grim depiction of the relationship between those with power and those with none. Throughout his work, Phaedrus refers repeatedly to his suffering and hardship because of his lesser social status as a freedman. In his prologue to the third book, for example, Phaedrus describes his feelings of affinity with the slave Aesop (lines 33–40). He says that it is only with distaste that he is accepted into the society of poets in spite of the fact that he is a born poet (lines 20–23) and he indicates that he was victimised in a prosecution brought by Sejanus (lines 41–44). Phaedrus' prologues suggest that he is personally acquainted with the themes of conflict, suffering and survival and this personal experience is woven into the material

[82] Nøjgaard 1967: 352-365.

of his fables. In short, Phaedrus sits uneasily between two worlds: the 'real' world of Roman society in which he cannot alter his status, and the 'literary' world in which he strives to excel.[83]

Although Babrius does not share Phaedrus' personal agenda, his fables do not shy away from depicting violence and conflict and the situation for those with less power is not presented as hopeless. Babrius portrays a variety of survival methods that are available to those with less power and many of these are not only *presented* as feasible and intelligent, but *are,* in fact, feasible and intelligent in the circumstances. Moving beyond comparisons with Phaedrus' collection, we have seen that some of Babrius' fables actually depict more negative and violent outcomes for protagonists than the equivalent fables in the *Augustana.* This finding makes it difficult to generalise about the overall tone of the Babrian collection and problematic to interpret submission as Babrius' ideological message. Furthermore, Babrius' interest in portraying the emotional world of his characters as they experience suffering and learn from their mistakes is, in my view, the mark of an empathetic outlook, not one that is unsympathetic to the experiences of those at the lower end of the hierarchy. The notion that Babrius was a member of the élite with direct connections to a royal household appears to have influenced the interpretation of his fables and to have resulted in a reading of the fables which presupposes, rather than convincingly demonstrates, Babrius' supposed commitment to an ideology of conformity.[84]

(i) The conception of personality in Babrius' fables

A distinctive and important aspect of Babrius' collection is the unique way in which he gives his readers insights into the innermost thoughts and feelings of his characters. Babrius does this more so than any other ancient fable author

[83] Bloomer 1997: 108.
[84] See Holzberg 2002: 61-62.

and, for this reason, he is said to have a more 'psychological' approach.[85] One possible reason for this is that Babrius' collection may demonstrate a shift away from the ancient Greek conception of human personality towards a more 'modern' approach. According to Gill, the conception of human personality that existed in ancient Greek culture was markedly different to the conception in later times in that the ancient Greeks tended to view the person as an 'objective-participant' rather than a 'subjective-individualist'.[86] The objective-participant defines himself and others as human because of, for example, their capacity to act on the basis of reason, to participate in shared forms of human life, and to become, in principle, fully ruled by reason. The subjective-individualist type, which is said to be the dominant type in modern society, defines himself and others as human beings because he is conscious of himself as an 'I', that is, a "unified locus of thought and will".[87] The subjective-individualist can exercise his capacity for autonomy and he understands that he possesses a unique personal identity. The objective-participant conception of the person is said to be apparent in monologues, such as that of Odysseus in Homer's *Iliad* 11.404–10. In episodes such as these, the protagonist makes a decision to act with respect to an objective norm, such as the concept of nobility or status, and not for personal reasons.[88] Gill describes this decision-making process as 'first-order reasoning'. The subjective-individualist type is more inclined toward 'second-order reasoning', which involves reflection on the goals or rules which are operative in first-order reasoning.[89]

In applying Gill's model to the *Augustana* fables, Zafiropoulos has suggested that the *Augustana* fables are dominated by first-order reasoning and that there are only a few fables in which second-order reasoning is apparent in the form

[85] Nøjgaard 1967: 281-282.
[86] Gill 1996: 11-12.
[87] Gill 1996: 11.
[88] Gill 1996: 69.
[89] Gill 1996: 133.

of, for example, a reflective phrase that is uttered by a suffering agent.[90] If we apply Gill's model to Babrius' collection we can observe a difference in the way that Babrius presents personality and individual reasoning. Second-order reasoning is more common and often more fully developed in the Babrian fable collection than in the *Augustana* fables.[91] In other words, the Babrian conception of personality is closer to the modern subjective-individualist conception of personality and more removed from the objective-participant conception. We can see this in Babrius' tendency to portray characters speaking aloud in the first person; in Babrius' extension of formulaic phrases such as 'woe is me' (οἴμοι) into fully developed reflections;[92] in the Babrian interest in revealing the inner psychology and emotion of characters when they are in conflict[93] and his tendency to intensify the suffering of the protagonist in order to show the effects of that suffering on the character's internal state.[94] Babrian protagonists frequently engage in second-order reasoning in which they reflect on their personal objectives and goals and how these goals are achieved, or are not achieved, in various outcomes. The *Augustana* fable collection is, for the most part, more objective in its approach. It is dominated by first-order reasoning and a comparative lack of interest in the internal world of the characters.[95]

This difference in approach explains why the outlook of the two collections with respect to conflict is different. Babrius is interested in the effects of conflict on the inner state of the characters while the *Augustana* focuses on concrete outcomes. By way of example, let us re-examine B115. A tortoise wishes that it could fly and an eagle offers to teach it. The eagle carries the tortoise up into the air and then drops it so that its shell smashes on the ground. As the tortoise is

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[90] Zafiropoulos cites P97, P116, P187 and P203 as examples (Zafiropoulos 2001: 77). Also see Holzberg 2002: 90.

[91] For examples of second-order reasoning in the Babrian fables see B2, B7, B16, B25, B29, B38, B40, B43, B60, B80, B115, B118, B119, B122, B129, B134, B137 and B143.

[92] B7, B118 and B122.

[93] B134.

[94] B43, B115, B129, B137 and B143.

[95] Zafiropoulos 2001: 77.

dying, it reflects on its earlier desire to fly and it regrets that it was not content dwelling on the ground. In this way, the protagonist exhibits second-order reasoning when it says (at lines 11–13):

...] "σὺν δίκῃ θνήσκω·
τί γὰρ νεφῶν μοι καὶ τίς ἦν πτερῶν χρείη
τῇ καὶ χαμᾶζε δυσκόλως προβαινούσῃ;"[96]

In the *Augustana* version of the same fable (P230), there is no second-order reasoning. The fable simply ends with the death of the protagonist.[97] According to Gill's model, then, it could be said that the Babrian fables are more 'modern' in their conception of human personality than the *Augustana* fables. At the same time, second-order reasoning does not always feature in the Babrian fables[98] and Babrius does not always give insights into a character's inner world.[99] It would be more precise, then, to say that although Babrius' collection contains examples of both conceptions of personality, the Babrian fables lean more toward presenting characters that are 'subjective-individualist', in that they are more conscious of their identity as individuals with the capacity to reflect on the reasons for their decisions and actions.

A similar tendency has been recognised as a feature of the ancient novels produced during the Second Sophistic. The ancient novels use long dialogues, monologues and speeches in order to enhance the dramatic quality of the events and to convey a more vivid impression of the internal world of the characters.[100] Babrius' frequent use of direct speech has a similar effect because it engages readers in the narrative and enables them to gain insights into a character's thoughts and feelings. Writers of ancient novels, particularly

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[96] ["I die justly. For what use were clouds and wings to one who makes his way grumpily along the ground?"]

[97] Another example in which the Babrian version has second-order reasoning but the *Augustana* version has none is P70 and B36. Examples of fables in which the second-order reasoning is different in the two versions include P2 and B137, P45 and B52, P167 and B60. There are three fables in which the mode of reasoning is basically the same. These are P176 and B143, P181 and B7, P187 and B122.

[98] See for example B5, B31 and B32.

[99] See for example B4, B18, B39, B73, B123 and B133.

[100] Holzberg 1995: 10-11.

Achilles Tatius, experiment with different narrative techniques in order to represent a character's psychology.[101] Reardon even describes Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* as an 'ego-narrative', that is, a narrative told in the first person by Clitophon to the ostensible narrator.[102] This technique adds to the realism of the emotions described in the narrative as readers see the situation through the eyes of the protagonist. In Babrius' fables, the self-conscious and reflective statements that are made by characters achieve a similar effect. They convey emotions such as regret and sorrow in a realistic way and encourage the reader to view the situation of the protagonist with empathy. The presentation of different states of emotion, and the conflict between different emotions within a character, are also said to be features of the ancient novels of this period.[103] In the fables, Babrius presents a variety of different emotions and portrays their effects on individual characters.[104] In some cases, emotions conflict in complex ways, which adds to the realism and dynamism of Babrius' characters.[105]

Thus, Babrius' narrative style may be part of a broader trend toward portraying a more reflective, individualistic and self-aware style of reasoning which is also seen in a variety of fictional works produced during the Second Sophistic. Compared to Babrius, the techniques are much more fully developed and refined in lengthy ancient novels such as Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. Babrius' technique is, of course, confined by the requirements of the genre which places limits on the length of his narratives and demands that the moral primacy of the fables be maintained. Nonetheless, Babrius' fable narratives still work within these bounds to produce character portrayals that are realistic, vivid and self-

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[101] Holzberg 1995: 84.
[102] Reardon 1999: 244.
[103] Fusillo 1999: 82.
[104] For a discussion of the emotions in the fables see Chapter Six.
[105] See, for example, the conflict between pride, vanity, fear, anger and outrage in the deer in B95.

reflective. Two of the most common techniques used by Babrius to achieve this effect are extended narratives and direct speech.[106]

(ii) Contemporary relevance of the themes in Babrius' fables

A further question of interest is to what extent the themes of conflict, suffering and survival may have been of contemporary relevance to Babrius and to what extent they may have been products of a literary mode. Certainly the focus on negative themes such as suffering and conflict provides Babrius with plentiful opportunities to exploit both satire and irony in his fables. Babrius uses satire to critique aspects of society such as kingship as well as different modes of behaviour, such as vanity and greed. By linking these satirical topics to the themes of conflict and suffering, Babrius reinforces the message that certain modes of behaviour lead to disastrous outcomes. Babrius also uses irony to reveal and ridicule certain traits. Characters that fall prey to stupidity, weakness and vanity are often portrayed as self-consciously recognising the irony that the outcome turned out to be the opposite of what they hoped for or expected. In addition to this, however, Morgan suggests that themes such as strife and conflict were important features of the broader moral outlook of the early Roman Empire:

> Many stories and sayings comment simply on the fact of strife; some describe its causes, from the arrogance and cruelty of power to the chiselling of the poor, from the pursuit of glory to the pursuit of money, from greed to lack of trust to sheer stupidity. In every genre, the number of sayings and stories that concern strife indicates another locus of cognitive dissonance in popular wisdom: strife is seen as both endemic in human life and acutely problematic.[107]

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[106] In Stoic philosophy too, during the second century CE, Francis maintains that there was a gradual shift from an interest in political morals to personal morals: "In retreating from radical social doctrine and theory and placing emphasis on practical morality, Stoicism shifted the emphasis in philosophy from — to use broad definitions — politics to psychology. Focus is drawn away from externals, such as the social and political structure, and placed on the internal dynamics of the individuals: motivation, intent, integrity, and self-possession" (Francis 1995: 5). In Babrius' fables, a similar shift is evident, in the greater interest in the effect of events on the internal world of individual characters rather than on social relationships.

[107] Morgan 2007: 163-164.

This suggests that in addition to their suitability to the genre, Babrius' portrayal of certain themes reflects the moral outlook of his time.

An interesting test case for determining the extent to which Babrius' fables accurately reflect, or distort, issues of contemporary relevance is the topic of supplication. As we have seen, supplication is depicted a number of times in the fables but it is rarely depicted as successful. The types of arguments that accompany acts of supplication are based on past conduct, the present situation or future consequences. Captors usually explain why they are unconvinced by the arguments and then deliver the punishment. The only occasions when suppliants persuade their captors are situations when suppliants amuse their captors or successfully prove their usefulness.

If we compare this portrayal of supplication in the fables to what is known about actual supplication in the ancient world, we find that the process of supplication did involve a rhetorical process that depended on persuasion and an appeal to the emotions. This is consistent with the picture of supplication that is presented in the Babrian fables, in which the 'arguing' phase, which Naiden calls the 'third step of supplication, is a key phase that acts as "a bridge between the ceremony and the act of judgment".[108] There also appears to be a degree of realism in the sorts of arguments that are put forward by suppliants in Babrius' fables. Roman suppliants are said to have attested their innocence, claimed to be undeserving of punishment, or requested pity from their captor.[109] Similarly, in the Babrian fables, characters argue that they did not intend to cause harm (B3), or that they should be pitied because killing them will bring little benefit to their captor (B107). According to Naiden, the Romans also developed the practice of *clementia*, that is, allowing a suppliant to admit his/her own guilt and ask for mercy. A similar practice is demonstrated in the

[108] Naiden 2006: 281.
[109] Naiden 2006: 240.

Babrian fables when the protagonist begs for mercy (ironically, from itself) in B134 and in B3 when the protagonist begs for his misdeed to be kept hidden.

In the fables, captors generally explain the reasons for their rejection of a suppliant's arguments. According to Naiden's analysis of supplication in the ancient world, this is consistent with the real-life practice of decision-making in which the supplicandus was required to give reasons for an unfavourable decision. In the real world, there were different options for rejecting a request but they often involved a rebuttal of the suppliant's arguments to show that the suppliant was an enemy, that they were indeed guilty, or that they were in the wrong.[110] In the Babrian fables, similar reasons are given by the captors, either by stating that the suppliant is an enemy (B13), that the suppliant is indeed guilty (B138 and B140) or that the suppliant's request is unreasonable (B3).

There is one important point of divergence. The Babrian fables suggest that the act of supplication is rarely successful. On this point, it is likely that there is a degree of distortion. Of the many acts of supplication that are mentioned by ancient authors in Babrius' time, only a very small proportion of the requests are denied.[111] Furthermore, as Naiden says, rejected suppliants were only sometimes killed.[112] This suggests that the Babrian fables tend to exaggerate the negative outcomes for suppliants. The purpose of this exaggeration is probably to emphasise the themes of conflict and suffering. By exaggerating the failure of supplication attempts, the fables reinforce a picture of the world as dominated by negative and hostile forces, and the importance of cunning, intelligence, and persuasion as alternative methods of survival.

The portrayal of supplication represents an interesting test case for determining the extent to which Babrius' fables accurately depict or exaggerate certain types

[110] Naiden 2006: 133.
[111] See Appendix 1b in Naiden 2006: 339-364.
[112] Naiden 2006: 146.

of situations and behaviours. It has demonstrated that, for the most part, the fable collection's portrayal of the mechanics of the situation and the corresponding behaviours are true to life. The main point of departure is in the final consequence. The fable collection has an exaggerated outlook. It depicts outcomes in a more negative light than they probably were in reality. This viewpoint is consistent with the core themes of the collection as well as with the moral purpose of the fables, a subject that we will examine in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: MORALS

The prevailing view among fable scholars is that Babrius is much less interested in the moral and didactic purpose of the fables than he is in presenting fables that are entertaining and enjoyable as narratives. Hence, Nøjgaard claims that the moral aims of the fables are neglected by Babrius,[1] Holzberg states that Babrius is not primarily interested in the didactic potential of the fables,[2] and Perry states that the moral aspects are, for Babrius, very much secondary to his goal of being witty, interesting and dramatic, and thereby entertaining his audience.[3] In addition to this, Nøjgaard claims that there is a fundamental conflict between Babrius' morality and the more traditional morality of Aesop in that Babrius applies himself to demonstrating the necessity of accepting the social order whereas Aesop sought to change the established order.[4]

My own view mounts a case that Babrius' has two simultaneous and equally balanced objectives: to produce fables that are interesting and entertaining as well as moral and didactic in purpose. Whilst I agree that Babrius presents fables that are entertaining and enjoyable, I do not agree that this weakens or obscures the moral function of the fables. Babrius' fable collection has a clearly discernible moral agenda by means of which different behaviours are either censured or praised. The fables demonstrate the types of characters that are likely to engage in certain behaviours, the ways in which those different behaviours are expressed and the outcomes. In many cases, Babrius' narrative style *enhances* the impact of the moral by encouraging the audience to become more involved in the narrative and therefore more vulnerable to the impact of the moral lesson. In this chapter I will demonstrate how Babrius achieves this

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[1] Nøjgaard 1967: 192.

[2] Holzberg 2002: 55.

[3] Perry 1959: 19; Perry 1965: xxv. This view is also evident in Crusius' article on two of Babrius' lengthier fables (B95 and B106) in which Crusius says that the narrative is of greater importance to Babrius than the moral (see Crusius 1894b).

[4] Nøjgaard 1967: 353.

through his use of narrative devices such as internal evaluation and direct speech.

The primary focus of this chapter is a detailed analysis of the moral framework of the Babrian fables. I will start with a discussion of Babrius' use of myth in his first prologue and its moral significance. I will then identify and discuss the range of behaviours that are either censured or praised in the fables. In the discussion that follows, I will consider some of the less conventional morals in Babrius' collection as well as some notable absences. I will discuss in what way my findings oppose Nøjgaard's views and the prevailing view and I will present an alternative picture of Babrius' core message. I will then consider to what extent Babrius' morals were 'popular' and discuss how individuals may have been expected to learn from the fables. I will endeavour to demonstrate that Babrius' moral views reflect the views of the majority, rather than minority, in the early Roman Empire.

I. Babrius' use of myth in the first prologue

In the prologue to the first book of his fable collection, Babrius refers to a mythical race of 'golden' men. The relevant portion of the prologue is as follows:

Γενεὴ δικαίων ἦν τὸ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων,
ὦ Βράγχε τέκνον, ἣν καλοῦσι χρυσείην,
μεθ' ἣν γενέσθαι φασὶν ἀργυρῆν ἄλλην·
τρίτη δ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐσμεν ἡ σιδηρείη.
ἐπὶ τῆς δὲ χρυσῆς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ζῴων
φωνὴν ἔναρθρον εἶχε καὶ λόγους ᾔδει
οἵους περ ἡμεῖς μυθέομεν ἐς ἀλλήλους,
ἀγοραὶ δὲ τούτων ἦσαν ἐν μέσαις ὕλαις·
ἐλάλει δὲ πεύκη καὶ τὰ φύλλα τῆς δάφνης,
καὶ πρῶτος ἰχθὺς συνελάλει φίλῳ ναύτῃ·
{ἐλάλει δὲ πέτρα καὶ τὰ φύλλα τῆς πεύκης,
ἐλάλει δ[ὲ κ]ἰχθύς, Βράγχε, νηῖ καὶ ναύτῃ.}
στρουθοὶ δὲ συνετὰ πρὸς γεωργὸν ὠμίλουν·
ἐφύετ' ἐκ γῆς πάντα μηδὲν αἰτούσης,
θνητῶν δ' ὑπῆρχε καὶ θεῶν ἑταιρείη.

μαθὼν δ' ἀρ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχοντα καὶ γνοίης
ἐκ τοῦ σοφοῦ γέροντος ἡμιν Αἰσώπου 15
μύθους φράσαντος τῆς ἐλευθέρης μούσης·[5]

From the very outset, this prologue establishes an atmosphere of moral instruction and guidance. By formally addressing a child (τέκνον: line 2) by the name of Branchus, the prologue suggests that the fables are being recited in a real-life atmosphere of moral and philosophical instruction. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, it is irrelevant whether this instruction actually took place and whether or not Branchus was a historical figure. The prologue serves a useful purpose in framing the narrative and establishing a connection between the poet Babrius, his direct listener (Branchus) and the wider audience.[6] The poet adopts the tone of one who is more mature and knowledgeable than Branchus. In turn, the audience is placed in the position of witnessing the instruction of a child which leads the audience to think in one sense that the fables are suitable for children and that their meaning will be easily grasped. It also instills an attitude of humility and acceptance of naiveté on the part of the audience who sit at the feet of a wise tutor. Furthermore, the placement of Branchus as an intermediary figure between Babrius and his audience reduces the potential for the audience to immediately feel repelled by the moralising purpose of the fables. The moral content of the fables is more palatable because the poet does not address his audience directly. As Newbigging observes, the automatic human response to direct preaching or moral criticism is an attitude of defiance and self-justification.[7] Babrius' indirect

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[5] [The race of just men, which they call golden, o Branchus child, was first, after which another came into being, silver they say, and the third one from them is our iron race. In the time of the golden ones, the rest of the living things had articulate speech and knew words such as those that we speak to each other, and assemblies of these creatures were held in the middle of the forests. The fir tree and the leaves of the laurel spoke, and all the fish spoke with the friendly sailor, {the rock and the leaves of the fir tree spoke, and fish spoke, o Branchus, with the ship and sailor} and sparrows conversed intelligibly with farmers. Everything grew from the earth which demanded nothing, and friendship prevailed between gods and mortals. Having learned that this was so, may you also come to know it from the wise old man, Aesop, who told us fables from his boundless Muse.] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 1-15.

[6] The audience is reminded of Branchus' presence again halfway through the collection in B74.15.

[7] Newbigging 1895: 19.

method of narration encourages the audience to respond to, and absorb the moral teaching.

Another important aspect of Babrius' prologue is his reference to the myth of the golden race. Perry suggests that this myth has little significance other than offering a romantic description that is designed to capture the imagination of the child Branchus and to entice the audience to engage with the collection.[8] Gera maintains that the myth fits neatly with the talking animals in Babrius' fables because it tells of a time when creatures could converse with humans.[9] Holzberg argues that Babrius' prologue looks back to Callimachus' *Iamb* 2 which also describes a time when creatures, as well as humans, possessed the power of speech.[10] Another possibility is that this myth enables Babrius to place himself alongside numerous other ancient authors who discussed the golden race in various works of mythology, poetry, and philosophy. Among the ancient Greeks, Hesiod was the first known author to use the term 'golden' in connection with a race of men who lived in the age of Kronos and knew neither work nor sorrow.[11] Pindar's second Olympian ode paints a similar picture of Kronos as king of the blessed.[12] Philosophers such as Plato made considerable use of the myth of the golden race in expounding a theory of cyclic change in the universe.[13] The fifth century Greek comedians Crates and Telecleides presented the golden age as a time of merriment, endless eating and pleasure.[14] In Babrius' own day, the orator Maximus of Tyre referred to the fable of the

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[8] See Perry 1965: lvi-lvii.

[9] Gera 2003: 19-20.

[10] Holzberg 2002: 52. In his second iamb, Callimachus speaks of a common language shared by nature and man in the time of Kronos. According to Callimachus, universality of language ultimately deteriorates to a point where the animals begin to complain to Zeus and to demand better lives (see 20F1 in VD 524). In a similar way, some of the Babrian fables depict creatures complaining about ill-treatment, old age and injustice, although these complaints are more commonly voiced to humans and only rarely to gods: see B13, B27, B51, B76, B83 and B142.

[11] Hes. *Op.* 92-129.

[12] Pi. *O.*, 2.70-75.

[13] Pl. *Plt.* 271C-272D.

[14] For a discussion of the relevant fragments see Gera 2003: 30.

golden race to compare the lives of men of old with men of the present day.[15] Horace, Virgil and Ovid also refer to the golden age in their poetic works.[16]

Yet, there is one important aspect of the myth that is fundamental but often underestimated and that is its moral purpose. Babrius' description of the golden race has a strong moral significance. In Greek literature and philosophy the golden race was viewed as a generation of men who were more *morally* refined than the men of the present day. As Socrates explains in Plato's *Cratylus*, for example, the epithet 'golden' referred to the fact that these men were "good and beautiful" and, as Socrates says, the same epithet can be applied to any man with these moral virtues.[17] Babrius makes it clear that neither he, nor his listener, belong to the time of the golden race. By describing the many positive aspects of the golden race, the poet implies that there are correspondingly negative aspects to be found among the present generation. The prologue thereby implies that men are unjust; that they do not have friendly relations with the gods; that linguistic barriers now exist between men, gods and animals, and that life is characterised by hard work and toil.[18] In this sense, Babrius' use of the myth is not just a literary flourish. It acts as a device for critiquing contemporary *mores*.[19] It suggests that Babrius is drawing attention to the moral shortcomings of his own generation by contrasting them with a utopian ideal:

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[15] Max. Tyr. 36.

[16] Hor. *Ep.* 16.64-5, *Odes*, 4.2.37-40; Verg. *Ecl. 4*; Ov. *Met.*, 1. 87-127. It is interesting, however, that Babrius refers to a golden *race* rather than a golden *age*. This suggests that Babrius was more familiar with, or had a preference for, the Greek version of this myth. Latin poets tend to refer to a golden age. Horace and Virgil, for example, view the golden age as a means of poetical escape to a distant time (Hor. *Ep.* 16.64-5; Verg. *Ecl. 4*) and sometimes use the concept to flatter particular rulers (Hor. *Odes*, 4.2.37-40). Ovid describes a distant past age in which men value good faith and righteousness and live happily without law, punishment or justice (Ov. *Met.*, 1. 87-127).

[17] Pl. *Cra.* 398a-398b.

[18] In a similar way, Dio Cassius describes Rome's descent from a kingdom of gold to iron and then rust: D.C. 72.36.4.

[19] On this use of the myth see Evans 2008: 38-39.

> The utopian writer lives in two worlds. His is correspondingly a double vision. He looks down from utopian heights with a sometimes exasperated or pitying mien but more often with comic relish for the follies and vanities of his own world. He looks up from his own world with a tragic sense of the unattainability of the ideal. The utopia he constructs in his imagination is a perfect world, shot through with reminders of the stubbornly flawed world he inhabits outside his imagination, in his own society.[20]

The utopian world that Babrius looks back to with admiration is exemplified by the morally superior race of golden men. The flawed world is that of the generation to which the poet and his audience actually belong. The myth of the golden race is therefore a means for the poet to express his longing for that which is lost and his desire to recapture certain high ideals and ways of living.

The main characteristic of the golden race was their ability to converse with all manner of living things, including trees, animals and gods. As far as other accounts of the golden race are concerned, Babrius goes further than other writers and poets in erasing all linguistic barriers between these different groups. As Gera notes:

> In Babrius' account, then, men in the age of Kronos have an exceptionally wide range of conversational partners – gods, their fellow men, birds, beasts, fish, stones, and leaves – and the fabulist is unusual in assigning so broad a group of interlocutors to these men of long ago. While Babrius does not actually place gods, men, *and* beasts in one conversational group it does seem as if he intends to erase all linguistic boundaries between the three groups. Generally, other writers on the age of Kronos either stress the fact that men and the *gods* share a joint language or portray men and *animals* as speaking together (and we do not find speech assigned to such inanimate objects as stones and leaves).[21]

In comparison with other fabulists, however, it is not unusual that Babrius refers to talking trees and objects as well as animals, men and gods.[22] Phaedrus' prologue to his first book indicates that his fables will depict both talking animals and trees (line 6). In the Babrian fable collection, discourse between animals is most common, followed by discourse between animals and men.[23]

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[20] Kumar 1991: 96.

[21] Gera 2003: 20.

[22] The *Augustana* depicts talking trees in P213 and talking objects in P93.

[23] Discourse between animals occurs in 60 of the fables (41% of the collection). Discourse between animals and mankind occurs in 22 of the fables (15% of the collection).

Gods and men also converse and, on occasion, gods also speak with animals and inanimate objects.[24]

For the most part, the fables are set in the present time of a morally inferior race.[25] Far from a time of abundance and leisure, we have seen that the fables depict conflict as well as suffering and toil. Many of the fables in the collection refer to professions, work and labour[26] and many of them depict man having to work in order to obtain food.[27] Contrary to the notion of a morally refined race, man is presented as untrustworthy, deceitful and wicked.[28] In other fables, mankind is portrayed as cowardly,[29] ruled by his passions,[30] greedy,[31] treacherous,[32] inconsiderate,[33] inattentive,[34] and foolish.[35] Rather than being friendly to men, the gods are portrayed as critical of mankind.[36]

Thus, although the majority of the fables are set in the time of the 'present' generation, it is only the form of communication in the fables that harks back to the time of the golden race. The fables preserve a form of discourse that is said

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[24] The following fables involve communication between gods and men (B10, B20, B30, B49, B63, B71, B117, B119 and B126). Two fables involve gods and animals talking (B48 and B56) and one involves a conversation between Zeus and the oaks (B142).

[25] There is an exceptional category of aetiological fables that deal with the mythological period just before, or at the time of, the creation of mankind (see B58, B59, B66 and B74).

[26] E.g. B7, B11, B20, B23, B29, B30, B37, B38, B50, B52, B55, B75 and B111.

[27] Examples of fables that portray the hunting of animals are B1, B61, B87, B92, B124 and B138. Other fables mention butchers (B21), farmers (B26, B33 and B88), herdsmen (B3, B45 and B113) and fishermen (B4, B6 and B9).

[28] E.g. B1, B16 and B33.

[29] E.g. B23 and B92.

[30] E.g. B22 and B116.

[31] E.g. B34 and B123.

[32] E.g. B98.

[33] E.g. B76 and B83.

[34] E.g. B113.

[35] E.g. B131 and B143.

[36] In the fables it is quite common for the gods to criticise humans or to express frustration with humans (see B10, B30, B63, B71, B117 and B126). The gods also deliberately distribute wickedness and faults among mankind (see B57 and B66). Overall, the picture is not one of harmonious friendship, although it is arguable that the relationship is no better or worse than the one usually portrayed in mythology. Mankind's relationship with the gods is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

to have existed only in the past; a time that is entirely different to the 'present' day because it was characterised by abundance, justice and happiness. At this time, man was capable of communicating with all manner of living creatures and objects. This was regarded as a sign of man's moral purity and refinement. Presumably, freer communication assisted man both to understand others and to be understood. It may also have assisted in the transmission of wisdom from one kind to another, such as between the gods and mankind, for example, or between men and animals. This form of discourse also appears to have been characterised by honesty and transparency.[37] Honest and transparent discourse may have assisted man to better understand himself and those around him and to develop more meaningful relationships. Babrius' myth suggests that, without this form of discourse, his own generation cannot understand, communicate or properly and fully relate to other living creatures, the environment, or the realm of the gods. Man can only communicate with his fellow men, and this severely restricts both the type and extent of knowledge that is available to him.

By linking the fables to this form of discourse, Babrius suggests that the wisdom of the fables comes from a different place and time. It reflects a higher order of moral values and the manner in which it is communicated is characterised by honesty and transparency. By means of his fables, Babrius is able to temporarily retreat from his present day world to one in which mankind has greater potential. In this world Babrius removes communication barriers and liberates the speech of his characters. This relaxation of the usual restrictions on communication allows the poet to expose his audience to a different mode of interaction and a different way of thinking. Through liberated speech, the characters in the fables have more opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world in which they live.[38] The characters of the fables express

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[37] Gera 2003: 55.

[38] Proclus expresses the view that unrestricted discourse existed in the golden age for the purpose of acquiring wisdom about other species. See Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 5.7-8 eds. Saffrey and Westerink 1987.

their thoughts and views fearlessly and without concern for causing offense.[39] The capacity for speech can change a character's position in an otherwise rigid hierarchical system. The power of speech gives the power of persuasion and this power can be exercised by those who are physically weak as well as those who are strong. The power of speech also enables role reversals to occur. Instead of a world in which man is presented as the preeminent living creature, the fables turn the tables on man by portraying animals as possessing superior powers of insight.[40]

Ultimately, Babrius' audience is the true beneficiary of this freedom of speech and unrestricted flow of wisdom. The fables expose their audience to a form of wisdom that, according to the poet, is not readily available in the real and current world. The fables aim to improve the moral quality of mankind by changing their customary outlook and exposing them to a form of discourse that they would not otherwise encounter. Through the myth of the golden race, the poet presents his fable collection as a vehicle for packaging and delivering 'golden' wisdom to the present generation of man; wisdom that is otherwise unknown, unheard of or only a very distant memory.

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[39] See B17, B27, B48, B49, B51, B53, B55, B63, B78, B101, B120, B128, B130, B132, B135, B138, B139, B140 and B142.

[40] In the fables animals frequently point out to men that they have failed to take some important fact or issue into account: see B3, B8, B50, B51, B76, B80, B83, B110 and B113. Gods also frequently enlighten man: see B20, B30, B49, B63, B71, B117, B119 and B126.

II. The moral framework of Babrius' fables

The types of behaviour that attract censure in Babrius' fables range from boasting, lying and self-deception to 'excesses' such as gluttony, greed and vanity. Those that attract praise include foresight, moderation, self-reliance, intelligence, truthfulness and learning from one's mistakes. This censure or praise is, for the most part, implicit in the fable narratives rather than explicit.[41] It is demonstrated in the course of the narrative by the consequences of the behaviour in question. Behaviours that lead to disastrous or unfortunate results for the protagonists are censured, whereas behaviours that lead to the avoidance of negative outcomes are praised. The moral lessons of the fables attach primarily to the behaviour of protagonists, while antagonists tend to act as critics of, or commentators on behaviour.

Forms of behaviour that attract censure:

(i) Vanity

The fables demonstrate that physical beauty lends itself to vanity. Characters that are attractive, such as the deer with beautiful horns,[42] the peacock with golden plumage[43] and the beautifully formed fir tree,[44] are all prone to vanity. These characters sing their own praises and are easily flattered by others. The fir tree, in B64, for example, praises its own appearance (lines 3–5):

> "καλὴ μέν εἰμι καὶ τὸ μέτρον εὐμήκης,
> καὶ τῶν νεφῶν σύσκηνος ὀρθίη φύω,
> στέγη τε νηῶν εἰμι καὶ τρόπις πλοίων·"[45]

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[41] As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this chapter will focus primarily on the moral message that emerges from the narratives of the fables rather than the epimythia, many of which are of spurious origin. For a discussion of the epimythia see Vaio 2001: xlii-xlvii.

[42] B43.

[43] B65.

[44] B64.

[45] ["I am beautiful and tall in height and I grow straight up, companion to the clouds. I am the roofs of temples and the keel of the boat."] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 87-94.

In other fables, vanity causes characters to strut about (as the peacock does in B65) and to admire their own reflections (as the deer does in B43). The vanity of these protagonists leaves them open to manipulation, criticism and disaster. In B95, for example, the deer's vanity enables the fox to manipulate it into entering the lion's den. The fox tells the deer that it is worthy of being the next king because of its 'proud appearance' (γαύρη ... εἶδος: line 21). In B64, the fir tree's vain claims provoke a retort and a threat from a bramble bush (lines 8–11), while, in B65, the peacock's vain behaviour provokes criticism from a crane (lines 5–6). In two other fables, vanity causes the protagonist to lose his/her life. In B43 a deer is punished by the goddess Nemesis because of its haughtiness about its appearance, and, in B95, the vain deer is tricked and killed by the lion.

The negative consequences of vanity elicit little sympathy from antagonists. In B77, for example, a fox mocks a crow for foolishly believing its flattering words (lines 10–12):

> τὸν ἡ σοφὴ λαβοῦσα κερτόμῳ γλώσσῃ
> "οὐκ ἦσθ' ἄφωνος" εἶπεν "ἀλλὰ φωνήεις·
> ἔχεις, κόραξ, ἅπαντα, νοῦς δέ σοι λείπει."[46]

In B64 and B65, antagonists criticise the vanity of the protagonists by pointing out that, although they may be attractive, they are inferior in other respects. In B65, for example, a crane points out that in spite of a peacock's beautiful plumage, it cannot fly but flaps around on the ground 'like a cock' (ὡς ἀλέκτωρ: line 5) while the crane is able to fly close to the stars. In B64, a bramble bush points out that bramble wood is used to make the axes that chop down the beautiful fir trees. In B72, a jackdaw that adorns itself in the plumage of other birds is viciously attacked and exposed by the other birds.[47] Through fables such as these, Babrius demonstrates that placing too much value on one's physical appearance is a negative trait and one that is worthy of ridicule.

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[46] [Seizing (the cheese), the clever one said with mocking tongue: "You were not mute. You do have a voice. You have everything, Crow, but you left your brain behind."]

[47] For a detailed discussion of this Babrian fable and other 'borrowed plumage' fables see Austin 1912.

(ii) Boasting

There are a number of different verbs that are used by Babrius to denote forms of boasting. These include αὐχέω ('to boast, pride oneself');[48] ὀγκόω (literally 'to enlarge' and metaphorically 'to puff up with pride');[49] φυσάω (literally 'to blow' and metaphorically 'to puff up' or 'make vain');[50] σεμνύνομαι ('to be haughty');[51] ἀλαζονεύομαι ('to swagger, use false pretensions'),[52] and γαυρόομαι ('to be haughty, disdainful').[53]

The types that are inclined to boast belong to opposite ends of the social hierarchy. On the one hand, there are the strong and powerful, represented by strong and large animals like deer and bears.[54] On the other hand, there are the weak and insignificant, represented by small creatures like frogs and toads.[55] In spite of their insignificance, frogs and toads 'puff themselves out', both literally and metaphorically. They tend to overestimate their physical and mental abilities and to boast about them.[56]

Common causes of boasting are false self-beliefs, excessive pride and vanity. In B120, for example, a frog claims to know more treatments than Paean, the physician for the gods. The frog says (at lines 4–6):

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[48] B14.1, B43.5, B85.12 and B114.1.
[49] B86.5 and B111.19. For the noun ὀγκός see B28.7, B34.6, B123.3,6.
[50] B9.5, B18.4, B28.7 and B34.5.
[51] B104.6.
[52] B104.5. For the noun ἀλαζών see B95.19.
[53] B43.15 and B96.6. For the adjective γαῦρος see B29.5, B43.6, B74.11, B95.21 and B111.13.
[54] E.g. B14 and B43.
[55] E.g. B28 and B120.
[56] Inebriation and favourable circumstances can also prompt boastfulness. In B114, for example, a lamp boasts when it is drunk on oil. In B96, a ram that is protected behind a wall calls out to a wolf and insults it. The wolf replies: "The place abused me. It's not for you to boast." ("ὁ τόπος μ' ἐλοιδόρησε· μὴ σὺ καυχήσῃ": line 4). In B5, a cock that has just won a fight flies onto the roof of a house and starts crowing loudly. It is suddenly snatched by an eagle, leaving the other cock to rule the hens. In B74.10-11 and B29.5, man in the prime of his life is presented as inclined to haughtiness.

"ἰατρός εἰμι φαρμάκων ἐπιστήμων,
οἵων τάχ' οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδ' ὁ Παιήων,
ὃς Ὄλυμπον οἰκεῖ καὶ θεοὺς ἰατρεύει."[57]

This is an absurd claim but one that is characteristic of the frog's boastful nature. Similarly, in B28, a toad is described as 'puffing herself up' (φυσῶσ' ἑαυτήν: line 7). Babrius uses this phrase to refer to the actual ability of a toad to expand its vocal sac[58] as well as to indicate the toad's inflated sense of self-worth. Apart from frogs and toads, dogs can also be proud and vain. In B104, a dog thinks that his owner has tied a bell around its neck as some kind of reward or distinction when, in fact, the purpose of the bell is to warn people of the dog's approach. The dog is described as 'swaggering through the marketplace shaking the bell' (δι' ἀγορῆς σείων / ἠλαζονεύετ': lines 4–5). The use of the verb 'to swagger, use false pretensions' (ἀλαζονεύομαι) suggests that the dog is deliberately drawing attention to itself and that this behaviour is indicative of arrogance.

The consequences of boasting vary in severity but they are all consistently negative. In B104, for example, the dog's 'swaggering' meets with the following reproach from another dog (at lines 6–8):

...] "ὦ τάλαν, τί σεμνύνῃ;
οὐ κόσμον ἀρετῆς τοῦτον οὐδ' ἐπιεικείης,
σαυτοῦ δ' ἔλεγχον τῆς πονηρίης κρούεις."[59]

The dog is publicly scolded by one of his own kind. A similar reaction to boasting can be observed in B120. After hearing the frog's claims to be a superior physician, a fox says in the presence of all of the other animals: "And how ... will you cure another, you who cannot save yourself when you are so pale green?" ("καὶ πῶς ... ἄλλον ἰήσῃ, / ὃς σαυτὸν οὕτω χλωρὸν ὄντα μὴ σῴζεις;": lines 7–8). The fox undermines the frog's overstated claims by

[57] ["I am a healer with an understanding of treatments which no-one knows as readily, not even Paean who lives on Olympus and is healer for the gods."]
[58] Duda 1948: 26.
[59] ["O wretch, why are you haughty? This ornament is not for virtue or reasonableness, you are ringing a proof of your rascality."]

drawing attention to the frog's unhealthy appearance. These fables demonstrate that those who boast are vulnerable to criticism and ridicule.[60]

(iii) Gluttony

There are three fables in the collection that depict gluttony. These are B34, in which a boy is described as 'eating insatiably' (ἐσθίων ... ἀπλήστως: line 4), B86, in which a fox is described as having a 'swollen stomach' (γαστὴρ ... ὠγκώθη: line 5), and B60, in which a mouse drowns in a pot of soup. Gluttons tend to regret overeating because of the pain and discomfort that follows. In B34, for example, a young boy eats too many sacrificial entrails at a festival and suffers a terrible stomach ache (lines 7–9):

> πεσὼν δ' ἐφ' ὑγραῖς μητρὸς ἀγκάλαις ἤμει,
> καὶ ταῦτ' ἐφώνει· "δυστυχὴς ἀποθνήσκω·
> τὰ σπλάγχνα γάρ, τεκοῦσα, πάντα μου πίπτει."[61]

Similarly, in B86, the fox that has gorged itself on food is described as 'lamenting' (κλαιούσῃ: line 7). In B60, however, the mouse simply accepts its predicament. The mouse says: "I have eaten and drunk and come near to all manner of delicacies. It is time for me to die" ("βέβρωκα" φησί "καὶ πέπωκα καὶ πάσης / τρυφῆς πέπλησμαι· καιρός ἐστί μοι θνήσκειν": lines 3–4).[62]

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[60] Another example of a verbal reproach can be found in B114. In this fable, a lamp is snuffed out by the wind when it boasts that it burns brighter than the stars. A man relights the lamp and says: "Keep shining lamp and be silent. The light of the stars does not die." ("φαῖνε, λύχνε, καὶ σίγα· / τῶν ἀστέρων τὸ φέγγος οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει.": lines 6-7) The fable demonstrates that one who is vulnerable and weak in life should not boast.

[61] [Falling into the tender embrace of his mother he was vomiting and saying this: "Poor me, I am dying, mother, all of my entrails are falling out."]

[62] This fable may satirize Latin epitaphs that have a similar theme such as the epitaph: "While I lived, I drank freely; drink up you who live" (*Dum vixi, bibi libenter. bibite vos qui vivitis*); "While I lived, I lived in the way that suits a freeman. What I ate up and drank up, is all mine." (*Dum vixi, vixi quomodo condecet ingenuom. / quod comedi et ebibi, tantum meu est.*); "Baths, wine, lovemaking ruin our bodies, but baths, wine, lovemaking are what makes life" (*Balnea vina Venus corrumpunt corpora nostra / set vitam faciunt b(alnea) v(ina) V(enus)*). Lattimore 1962: 261-262. I am grateful to D. Kelly for these references and translations.

Antagonists tend to ridicule the feelings of self-pity and regret that follow an episode of gluttony. In B86, for example, the fox is mocked for overeating and getting stuck in the tree hollow. The fable says at lines 7–10:

> ἑτέρη δ' ἀλώπηξ ὡς ἐπῆλθε κλαιούσῃ,
> σκώπτουσα "μεῖνον" εἶπεν "ἄχρι πεινήσῃς·
> οὐκ ἐξελεύσῃ πρότερον ἄχρι τοιαύτην
> τὴν γαστέρα σχῇς, ἡλίκην ὅτ' εἰσῄεις."[63]

Similarly, in B34, when the young boy complains to his mother that he is about to die, she says bluntly: "Quickly throw up, do not hold back. You are vomiting not your innards, child, but those of the bull." ("θάρσει κἀπόβαλλε, μὴ φείδου·/ οὐ γὰρ σά, τέκνον, ἀλλ' ἐμεῖς τὰ τοῦ ταύρου": lines 10–11).

Fables that portray the enjoyment of food in moderation reinforce the moral reprobation of gluttony. In B108, for example, a country mouse is portrayed as wise because it refuses to be lured by the luxurious foods available in the city. In B6, a fisherman is portrayed as prudent because he refuses a fish's suggestion to throw it back into the sea so that it can be caught again when it is bigger. In B100, a wolf is portrayed as sensible because it refuses to sacrifice its freedom, as a dog has done, for the sake of plentiful food. Taken together, these fables form a complementary group; criticising gluttony on the one hand, and praising moderation and restraint on the other.

(iv) Greed

There are several fables in the collection that depict forms of greed. Babrius depicts greed for wealth (B123 and B131), greed for property (B45), and greed for food (B79).[64] The character that is most often depicted as greedy in the fables is man himself.[65] In B123, for example, a man owns a bird that lays golden eggs

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[63] [Another fox came upon him as he was lamenting and mockingly said: "Stay until you're hungry. You will not get out until your stomach is as big as when you went in."]

[64] Greed for food differs from gluttony because in the case of the former, the protagonist wants more food but is unable to attain it.

[65] Malherbe suggests that greed and covetousness were conventional subjects of Roman moral teaching in the first and second centuries CE (Malherbe 1986: 154-157).

but he is not content with this and desires to find the source of the gold. In B131, a young man is described as squandering his property through gambling and, in B45, a goatherd tries to increase his herd by luring some wild goats. The dog is also depicted as greedy. In B79, for example, a dog has already successfully stolen a piece of meat from a kitchen but it is greedy for more.[66]

Fables about greed tend to follow a similar storyline pattern. In each case, the protagonist is presented with a chance to gain even greater wealth or property and he gambles everything in the hope of winning that additional prize. In B123, for example, a man already possesses a remarkable bird that lays golden eggs but, in the hope of finding the source of the gold, he kills the bird. In B45, a goatherd already possesses a herd of domestic goats but, when he sees wild goats that are bigger and stronger than his own, he neglects to give food to his herd in the hope of luring the others. In B131, the young man who has already gambled away most of his property gambles away his last piece of warm clothing in the hope that he will not need it. In B79, the dog that has stolen the piece of meat mistakenly thinks that it sees another dog with a larger piece of meat and goes after it.

In each case, the protagonist's attempt to obtain more property leaves him in a worse state than before: the man in B123 kills the bird but finds nothing of value inside it; the goatherd in B45 loses both herds and returns home with nothing; the young man in B131 loses his cloak and then suffers from a cold change in the weather, and the dog in B79 loses its original piece of meat and finds that the other dog was merely a reflection of himself. The dire consequences of greed speak for themselves. In some fables, however, Babrius emphasises the negative consequences by pointing out that the protagonist's

[66] Other fables in which the dog is associated with food are B42, B87 and B128 but the dog is not always gluttonous. Other fables portray the dog as an intelligent and faithful companion to humans, as in B69, B110 and B128. For a discussion of how the dog was regarded in antiquity see Gilhus 2006: 48.

hope was unfulfilled and the loss was devastating. B45 (discussed above in Chapter Two) for example, ends with the following statement: "Having hoped for better goats, he did not profit, nor did he have what was his at the outset." (ἐλπίσας δὲ τὰς κρείσσους / οὐκ ὤνατ' οὐδ' ὧν αὐτὸς εἶχεν ἐκ πρώτης: lines 13–14). Similarly emphatic closing remarks can be seen in B79.5–6 and B123.6–7.

(v) Complaining and blaming others

The verb μέμφομαι ('to blame' or 'reproach') is used in B38.4 and B106.30 and the adjective μέμψιμος in B142.2. In some circumstances, μέμφομαι is used in the sense of 'complaining', such as in B97.10. Other verbs that are used to describe the voicing of a complaint are κρώζω ('to croak' or 'to croak out'),[67] κράζω ('to croak' or 'screech'),[68] and οἰμώζω ('to cry' 'wail' or 'lament').[69] The types of animals that complain in the fables are diverse. Crows and other birds (such as cocks and cranes) are associated with the verbs κρώζω and κράζω. Other creatures or objects that complain include wagons (B52.5), wolves (B105.4) and lions (B97.10). It would seem, then, that the act of complaining is less specific to a particular type of animal than some of the other behaviours we have examined so far. This suggests that the act of complaining is not associated with certain character types, as greed and vanity tend to be, for example. Rather, it is a behaviour that is prompted by one's circumstances.

Characters complain either because they have less than others or because they have lost a benefit. An example of the first type is the sheep that complain in B128 because they live on meagre food compared to the well fed sheep-dog that guards them.[70] An example of the second type is the wolf that complains in

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[67] B52.5 and B77.7.

[68] B3.11, B5.6, B65.4, B77.9 and B105.4.

[69] B52.7 and B129.10.

[70] This fable is referred to in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* at 2.7.13-14. Aristarchus seeks advice from Socrates about how to deal with a number of female relatives who are complaining that Aristarchus is the only idle member of the household. Socrates advises Aristarchus to tell the

B105 because the lion robs him of the sheep he has just stolen. The complaints vary in substance and tone. In B105, for example, the wolf that is robbed by the lion says: "That's not fair. You have taken what was mine" ("ἀδίκως μ' ἀφείλω τῶν ἐμῶν": line 4). The wolf complains of an alleged injustice but it also voices this complaint a safe distance away from the lion so that it cannot be attacked! In contrast, the sheep in B128 complain directly to their shepherd about the sheep-dog receiving preferential treatment. Their spokesperson says (at lines 2–9):

> "κείρεις μὲν ἡμᾶς, καὶ πόκους ἔχεις κέρσας,
> <τὸ> γάλα δ' ἀμέλγων ἔστι σοι φίλον πῆξαι,
> ἡμῶν δὲ τέκνα μῆλά σοι περισσεύει.
> πλέον οὐδὲν ἡμῖν· ἀλλὰ χὴ τροφὴ γαίης 5
> ἅπασ' · ἐν ὄρεσι <δ'> εὐθαλὲς τί γεννᾶται;
> βοτάνη <γ'> ἀραιὴ καὶ δρόσου γεμισθεῖσα·
> <τὴν> κύνα δὲ φέρβεις ἡμιν ἐν μέσοις ταύτην
> τρέφων ὁποῖα σαυτὸν εὐθαλεῖ σίτῳ."[71]

In B142, some oak trees approach almighty Zeus and begin to speak "words that cast blame" (μύθων μεμψίμων: line 2).[72] Their complaint is presented in the form of an "anguished question".[73] The oak trees say: "O Zeus, life-source and father of all plants, if we are cut down, why did you even create us?" ("ὦ Ζεῦ γενάρχα καὶ πατὴρ φυτῶν πάντων, / εἰ κοπτόμεσθα πρὸς τί κἀξέφυς ἥμας;": lines 3–4).

Complaints are met with reasoned argument, not with violence or aggression. In B128, for example, the sheep-dog successfully handles the sheep's complaints by giving the following response (lines 11–14):

> "εἰ μὴ παρήμην κἀν μέσοισι πωλεύμην,[74]

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fable about the sheep and the sheep-dog to the women and, according to Xenophon's account, it successfully pacifies them.

[71] ["You shear us and, having shorn us, you have our wool. Squeezing our milk, it is pleasing to you to make it into cheese. Our children multiply your flocks. We get no advantage. Instead, all our food is from the earth. What abundance is there on the mountains? Only slender grass loaded with dew. But you nourish this dog in the midst of us, nurturing her with rich food just as you feed yourself."]

[72] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 167.

[73] Vaio 2001: 168.

[74] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 165-166.

οὐκ ἄν ποθ' ὑμεῖς ἔσχετ' ἄφθονον ποίην·
ἐγὼ δὲ περιτρέχουσα πάντα κωλύω
δρηστῆρα λῃστὴν καὶ λύκον διωκτῆρα."[75]

At other times, complaints are met with dry humour. In B105 (discussed above in Chapter Two), for example, we recall that the lion responds to the wolf's complaint that the lion stole its sheep by laughing at the wolf and saying: "What! Did you come by it honestly, as a gift from friends?" ("σοὶ γὰρ δικαίως ὑπὸ φίλων ἐδωρήθη;": line 6).[76] In B142, Zeus responds to the oak tree's question by smiling and saying (at lines 6–8):

"αὐταὶ καθ' αὑτῶν εὐπορεῖτε τὴν τέχνην·
εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὑμεῖς στελεὰ πάντα †τίκτοιτε,
οὐκ ἂν γεωργὸς πέλεκυν ἐν δόμοις †εἶχεν."[77]

Zeus unexpectedly turns the tables on the complaining oak trees. He presents a new point of view and shows them that they are the source of the problem as well as the victims. The fable demonstrates that people have no right to complain about their fate if they play a part in their own downfall.

(vi) Trying to be what one is not

The verb μιμέομαι ('to imitate, mimic, copy') appears in B28.10, B41.4, B73.3, B137.6 and B139.6. Two additional fables depict animals behaving in ways that are contrary to their true nature (B129 and B125). The ass is the most prominent character in these fables. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ass occupies a position that is low down in the hierarchy of animals. It is destined to work hard and to suffer. The ass tries to improve its lot by copying the behaviour of those who are more successful or fortunate but, in doing so, it often finds itself in a worse position. In B129 (discussed above), for example, the ass envies the carefree little dog that plays around its master's feet and is regarded with

[75] ["If I was not present in your midst, going to and fro, you would never be able to have bounteous grass. By running around everywhere, I keep away the ruthless robber and the pursuing wolf."]

[76] Textual amendment and translation from Vaio 2001: 146.

[77] ["You yourselves supply the means for the craft. If you did not produce all the handles, the farmer would not have an axe in his house."] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 168-169.

affection and delight. The ass, meanwhile, is described as suffering and labouring (lines 5–9):

> ὁ δ' ὄνος γ' <ἔκαμνε> νύχθ' <ὅλην> ἀλετρεύων
> πυρὸν φίλης Δήμητρος, ἡμέρης δ' ὕλην
> κατῆγ' ἀφ' ὑψους, ἐξ ἀγροῦ θ' ὅσων χρείη·
> καὶ μὴν ἐν αὐλῇ παρὰ φάτναισι δεσμώτης
> ἔτρωγε κριθὰς χόρτον, ὥσπερ εἰώθει.[78]

The ass cannot tolerate the differential treatment. It breaks the ropes that tether it to its manger and it enters the man's courtyard. There it begins to behave like the puppy dog, 'fawning' and trying to 'skip about' (σαίνων ... καὶ θέλων περισκαίρειν: line 14). In doing so, it smashes all the furniture and injures the man. Other fables demonstrate similarly imitative behaviour. In B125, an ass ventures up onto the roof of a house and tries to imitate the playful antics of a monkey while, in B139, an ass spreads a lion's skin over its back and pretends to be a lion.

In each case, the consequences are severe. In B129, the ass is beaten to death by his master's servants; in B125, a man leads the ass down from the roof of the house before striking him with a stick and, in B139, the ass is similarly beaten. In B129, the ass acknowledges the foolishness of its behaviour and utters a lament before dying (at lines 23–25). In B125, the ass is more reluctant to accept its lesson. The ass speaks to the man who is beating him and says defiantly: "And only yesterday ... and not very long ago, an ape delighted you by doing the very same thing" ("καὶ μὴν πίθηκος ἐχθές ... καὶ πρώην / ἔτερπεν ὑμᾶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιήσας": lines 5–6). In B139, the ass is silent while the man who is beating the ass says: "Born an ass, do not imitate a lion" ("<ὄνος> πεφυκὼς <μὴ λέοντα μιμήσῃ>": line 6). These fables suggest that attempts not to be what one is are doomed to fail and that behaving in ways that are contrary to one's nature leads to disaster.

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[78] [The ass was worn out grinding grain all night, the grain of dear Demeter, and in the daytime, he brought down wood from the hilltops and whatever was needed from the fields. Even in the courtyard beside the manger he was tethered and gnawed the barley fodder, as was his custom.]

Other animals that try to change their true natures are jackdaws, kites, toads and lizards. Birds such as the jackdaw and kite are similar to the ass in that their attempts to imitate the characteristics of others end in failure. In B73, for example, a kite loses its voice because it tries to neigh like a horse. In B137, a humble jackdaw tries to imitate a mighty eagle by swooping down and carrying off a lamb. The jackdaw fails to lift the lamb and it is captured and tormented.[79] Toads and lizards are somewhat different. They do not try to become like others because they want to be more accomplished or more fortunate. Rather, they truly believe that they possess superior qualities. In B41, for example, a lizard bursts open because it is so determined to match the size of a dragon. Similarly, in B28, a toad is at risk of bursting because it believes that it can match the size of an ox.

(vii) Self-deception

A related category of fables depicts characters who mistakenly think that they possess more positive qualities than is actually the case. In some cases, this attitude is signified by the use of the verb βουκολοῦμαι ('to delude or beguile oneself'), as in B19.7, or the noun βουκόλημα ('beguilement'), as in B136.9. Self-deception is fuelled by an intense desire for something and the frustration of that desire.[80] The desire is often fuelled by an overestimation of one's personal qualities[81] or a lack of self-knowledge.[82] It can involve ignoring certain information[83] or not engaging in certain thought processes.[84] The fables

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[79] This fable is fragmentary. The jackdaw's attempt to imitate the eagle is preserved in lines 1-4 of the text but the remainder of the fable has been reconstructed by Perry: see Perry 1965: 181.

[80] An example is the fox desiring the grapes in B19 or the lion desiring to marry the maiden in B98.

[81] In B62, a mule thinks that it can run as fast as a horse, and in B101, a wolf thinks that it is a lion because of the nickname assigned to it.

[82] The crab in B39, for example, does not take its own size into account when it offers to act as a mediator for the whales and dolphins.

[83] The fox ultimately ignores the fact that the grapes are ripe in B19, for example.

demonstrate how self-deception is used to reduce anxiety and to sustain a positive self-image. Through self-deception, characters seek to believe in positive self-affirming statements such as: 'I am influential', 'I am special', 'I am significant', and 'I am reasonable'.[85] The contradictory evidence, if it were allowed to surface, would involve an admission of weakness, insignificance and inferiority.[86] To avoid these feelings of worthlessness, characters filter out any evidence that contradicts their beliefs.

The well-known fable of the fox and the grapes offers a clear demonstration of self-deception. The Babrian version of the fable (B19) is as follows:

Βότρυς μελαίνης ἀμπέλου παρωρείῃ
ἀπεκρέμαντο. τοὺς δὲ ποικίλη πλήρεις
ἰδοῦσα κερδὼ πολλάκις μὲν ὡρμήθη
πηδῶσα ποσσὶν πορφυρῆς θιγεῖν ὥρης·
ἦν γὰρ πέπειρος κεἰς τρυγητὸν ἀκμαίη. 5
κάμνουσα δ' ἄλλως, οὐ γὰρ ἴσχυε ψαύειν,
παρῆλθεν οὕτω βουκολοῦσα τὴν λύπην·
"ὄμφαξ ὁ βότρυς, οὐ πέπειρος, ὡς ὤμην."[87]

Babrius describes the grapes as 'dark' (πορφυρῆς: line 4), 'ripe' (πέπειρος: line 5) and 'ready' for vintage (ἀκμαίη: line 5). Yet, in spite of the fox's perseverance, she is unable to reach them. This causes some anxiety for the fox, because her desire is unfulfilled and she is forced to admit a lack of ability. In order to alleviate this anxiety, the fox tells herself that the grapes are sour. The fox reinforces this self-deception by stating the falsehood to herself out loud (line 8).[88] The fox is described as 'deluding her grief' (βουκολοῦσα τὴν λύπην:

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[84] In B101, the wolf fails to concede that the name 'lion' is only meant as a nickname; in B89, a wolf tries to temporarily ignore its natural instincts to kill a lamb; and in B98, a lion fails to consider the consequences of removing its claws and teeth.

[85] B39, B84, B89 and B104.

[86] For an example of the effect of such a realisation see B62.5-6.

[87] [A bunch of black grapes hung down from a vine on a hillside. A fox, full of cunning, spied them and set about leaping to reach the dark fruits with her paws over and over again. For the grapes were ripe and ready for vintage. Wearing herself out for nothing because she was not strong enough to reach them, she went away deluding her disappointment by saying: "The bunch was sour, not ripe, as I thought."] For the *Suda*'s variant of line 6 see Vaio 2001: 47.

[88] This use of direct speech also makes the scene more vivid for the audience (see Chapter Two).

line 7). Self-deception enables the fox to find some comfort and to sweeten her defeat.

B136 portrays a similar act of self-deception. The fable describes a certain young man who is keen to hunt. The young man's father, meanwhile, has a dream that his son is attacked and killed by a lion so he confines his son within a richly decorated house:

...] <καὶ φοβούμενος> μήπως
ὕπαρ γένηται καὶ τὸ φάσμ' ἀληθεύσῃ
κάλλιστον οἶκον ἐξελέξατ' ἀνδρῶνα
ὑψηλὸν <ὄντ'> εὔδμητον ἡλίου πλήρη,
κἀκεῖ τὸν υἱὸν παρεφύλασσε συγκλείσας.
χὤπως ἔχῃ τι βουκόλημα τῆς λύπης
ἐνέθηκε τοίχοις ποικίλας γραφὰς ζώων,
ἐν οἷς ἅπασι καὶ λέων ἐμορφώθη.[89]

The paintings of the animals are supposed to help the young man 'delude his grief' (βουκόλημα τῆς λύπης: line 9). Ironically, the father's attempt to protect the boy from danger and, at the same time, to keep him amused, ends in disaster. The young man attacks the picture of the lion and is wounded by a splinter which causes an infection and, ultimately, his death.

Other examples of self-deception in the fables concern false beliefs about personal qualities. In B39, for example, a tiny crab imagines that it can act as a mediator in a dispute between the dolphins and whales. The fable's moral tag states that minor players have no authority to settle serious political conflicts.[90] A further example is B101. In this fable, a large wolf is admired by his fellow wolves and earns the nickname 'lion'. In time, the wolf treats this nickname seriously and leaves the other wolves to live with the lions. The self-deception of the wolf is criticised when the fable describes how the wolf 'senselessly'

[89] [Fearing that the dream might come to pass and the vision prove true, he selected a very beautiful house as a man's apartment, being lofty, well-built and full of sunshine. There he shut up his son under guard. And so that he would have some beguilement in his grief, he placed colourful pictures of animals on the walls. Among all these, a lion was depicted.]
[90] For discussion see Vaio 2001: 69.

(ἀγνώμων: line 2) separated himself from the other wolves. The wolf's self-deception is mocked by a wily fox (lines 5–8).

B62 presents a case of momentary self-deception. The fable begins as follows (lines 1–4):

> Ἡμίονος ἀργῆς χιλὸν ἐσθίων φάτνης
> καὶ κριθιήσας ἐτρόχαζε κἀφώνει
> τένοντα σείων· " ἵππος ἐστί μοι μήτηρ,
> ἐγὼ δ' ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐν δρόμοις ἧττων."[91]

The mule is unable to sustain this self-deception for very long. Lines 5–6 of the fable read:

> ἄφνω δ' ἔπαυσε τὸν δρόμον κατηφήσας·
> ὄνου γὰρ εὐθὺς πατρὸς ὢν ἀνεμνήσθη.[92]

The fable illustrates how self-deception can be demolished by a realisation of the true state of affairs. It also demonstrates the negative impact of that realisation upon self-deception: the mule stops 'acting' suddenly and feels deflated.

Other characters react negatively when they detect self-deception in others. The reactions range from anger[93] to ridicule[94] and physical violence.[95] Antagonists disillusion self-deceived characters by uttering statements that cut though self-deception in a simple and direct way.[96] It is very rare for a character to be allowed to continue self-deception and to escape criticism.[97] Some of the fables

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[91] [A sleek mule was eating hay from its manger when it became so bloated with rich food that he felt like sowing his wild oats. He took off and called out while shaking his hooves: "My mother is a horse and I am in no way inferior to her in galloping."]

[92] [All of a sudden, he stopped his run and was downcast for suddenly he remembered that his father was an ass.]

[93] E.g. B104.

[94] E.g. B101.

[95] E.g. B98.

[96] E.g. B104.6-8.

[97] Only two fables allow characters to perpetuate their self-deception without any negative consequence: in B19, the fox convinces herself that the grapes are sour and this belief remains unchallenged, and in B42, a dog maintains that it had a wonderful time at a banquet when, in actual fact, the cook threw it over the wall and out into the street.

portray particularly nasty endings for characters that deceive themselves.[98] The negative consequences of self-deception indicate that this form of behaviour was viewed with disapproval: "[f]eigning and dissimulation are errors that the fable aims to ward off by exposing them".[99]

(viii) Dishonesty

The verb ψεύδω ('to cheat' or 'to lie') appears in B81.3, the nouns ψεύδος and ψεύσμα appear in B57.1, B81.5 and B126.6, and the noun ψεύστης appears in B57.13 and B136.13. In B95, the fox lies on three separate occasions at lines 14–35, 67–86 and 100–102. On the first two occasions, the fox lies to a deer in an attempt to lure the deer into a lion's den. As discussed above in Chapter Two, the audience is aware that the fox is lying, which creates suspense and dramatic irony. On the third occasion, the fox boldly lies to its 'friend' the lion, saying that the reason why the lion cannot find the deer's heart is that the deer had none. In fact, the fox stealthily ate the heart as its reward.

B57 is an aetiological fable that seeks to explain why the race of Arabs is supposedly prone to lying. The Arabs are said to tell lies because Hermes once filled a wagon with lies (ψευσμάτων: line 1) and set about distributing the lies among the different races of mankind. When Hermes reached the land of the Arabs, his wagon overturned and the Arabs plundered all of the remaining goods from the wagon thinking that they were valuable. In the final lines of the fable Babrius adds the following comment (lines 12–14):

> ἐντεῦθεν Ἄραβές εἰσιν, ὡς ἐπειράθην,
> ψεῦσταί τε καὶ γόητες, ὧν ἐπὶ γλώσσης
> οὐδὲν κάθηται ῥῆμα τῆς ἀληθείης.[100]

B126 is another aetiological fable which, in this case, explains why truth is absent from mankind. A man finds Truth standing alone in the wilderness and

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[98] E.g. B41, B98 and B118.

[99] Keenan 1997: 62.

[100] [Hence the Arabs are, as I have experienced, both liars and cheats, there being no word of truth sitting on their tongues.]

asks why she no longer dwells in the city. Truth replies: "Among the ancients, falsehood was found amongst the few but now it has spread among all mortal men" ("<τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν> παρ' ὀλίγοισιν ἦν ψεῦδος, / νῦν δ' εἰς βροτοὺς ἅπαντας †ἐλήλυθε ψεῦδος†": lines 6–7).[101]

Although dishonesty is not presented in a favourable light, the fables do not portray any negative consequences that flow from dishonesty. The fox that lies in B95 manages to deceive both the foolish deer and his friend the lion. In B122, lying also leads to success, as the ass uses dishonesty to successfully escape from the wolf. The fact that the fables do not portray any serious consequences for dishonesty suggests that it was regarded as a behaviour that was difficult to detect and punish and that, perhaps, in some circumstances, it was seen as necessary and permissible.[102] In B81, for example, a fox suspects that an ape is lying and says: "So lie as you please, since you don't have a way of proving the truth" ("ὡς θέλεις ψεύδου, / ἔλεγχον οὐκ ἔχουσα τῆς ἀληθείης": lines 3–4).[103] The fox does not rebuke the ape for lying; it merely recognises that it cannot prove or refute the ape's claim. In fact, the only fable in which dishonesty is not portrayed as an ambivalent quality is the fable about the Arabs (B57).

Forms of behaviour that attract praise:

(ix) Self-reliance

Self-reliance is a moral quality that is praised in the fables. The fables demonstrate the benefits of self-reliance by portraying the negative consequences of relying on, and trusting in, others. The verb πιστεύω ('to believe, trust, rely on') appears in B16.10, B50.11, B88.19, B98.12, B99.5 and in the epimythion of B87.7. The noun πίστις is found in B99.4.

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[101] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 160.

[102] This is consistent with the dishonesty of Odysseus, for example, which is presented as a positive aspect of his trait of wiliness.

[103] Another example of a fox's suspicion is in B14 when a fox does not believe a bear's claim that it does not enjoy mauling corpses.

One aspect of self-reliance is the notion that men should not be too eager for help from gods and heroes but should rely on their own best efforts instead.[104] In B20, for example, an ox-driver whose wagon has fallen into a ravine immediately starts praying to Heracles to help him. Heracles appears and says to the man (lines 6–8):

> ...] "τῶν τροχῶν ἅπτου
> καὶ τοὺς βόας κέντριζε. τοῖς θεοῖς δ' εὔχου,
> ὅταν τι ποιῇς καὐτός, ἢ μάτην εὔξῃ."[105]

The fable demonstrates that self-reliance is foremost and that praying to the gods may only be effective if personal effort is at the maximum.

Other fables in the collection demonstrate that one should not trust statements or rely on others too readily. A wolf in B16, for example, believes a wet-nurse's threat that she will cast her crying baby to the wolves unless it is silent. The wolf waits a long time for this to eventuate and then departs with nothing. In B98, a lion trusts a father's promise of his daughter's hand in marriage but the lion's trust is betrayed. In B67, a wild ass engages in a hunting expedition alongside a lion and, because of its involvement in the hunt, it expects to receive a portion of the catch but receives nothing. In B55, an ass and an ox are yoked together to plough a field. In turn, the ass expects that the ox will help it with its tasks, but the ox refuses to do so.

The consequences of trusting and relying on others are dire. They include death,[106] injury,[107] losing one's family,[108] suffering,[109] going without food,[110] or

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[104] See B2, B20, B23, B49 and B63.
[105] ["Grab hold of the wheels and goad the oxen. Pray to the gods when you yourself are doing something, otherwise you pray in vain."]
[106] E.g. B33, B95 and B98.
[107] E.g. B130.
[108] E.g. B118.
[109] E.g. B131.
[110] E.g. B16.

simply gaining nothing.[111] In some cases, the negative outcome is reinforced by a criticism or threat from an antagonist. In B67, for example, a lion threatens to attack a wild ass unless it relinquishes its claim to a share of joint proceeds. In B98, a lion is criticised for trusting a man's promise to give his daughter away in marriage. Conversely, a protagonist will sometimes criticise an antagonist for a failure of trust. In B130, for example, a wolf criticises a fox for allowing it to unknowingly enter into a trap; in B131, the man criticises the swallow for deceiving him into thinking that Spring had arrived and, in B75, a man criticises his doctor for telling him that he would not recover from an illness. These criticisms only occur when there is parity between the two parties and there is no real threat of violence or retaliation from the character that is criticised.

The fables demonstrate that those who are untrustworthy are also vulnerable to betrayal. Mankind is shown to be especially untrustworthy and the suggestion is that he will suffer for this (especially in B50 which involves the breaking of an oath).[112] The fox is trusted by others in B95 and B130 but he is generally too cunning to trust others in turn. Other animal characters that trust in others but are then killed or betrayed are the deer in B95 and wild ass in B67. Collectively, these fables demonstrate that trusting and relying upon others is perilous and unwise. Expectations of others are generally unfulfilled. Self-reliance may involve more effort and smaller gains, but it is ultimately a safer and wiser course of action.

[111] E.g. B50, B55, B67, B88 and B94.

[112] Other fables in which mankind is portrayed as untrustworthy are B16, B33, B75, B88, B98 and B118.

(x) Foresight [113]

Foresight is the special ability to see a future risk or potential consequence that is unseen by others. In the fables, this ability is characteristic of those who are older, more experienced and wiser than others. In most cases, the protagonist explains the risk to the other characters, and presumably (although it is rarely stated), the course of action is altered. A clear example of the use of foresight is B21. In this fable (also discussed above in Chapter Three), the herd of oxen object to continually being slaughtered and sacrificed so they resolve to declare war on the butchers. While they are preparing for battle, we recall that the old ox says to them (at lines 6–10):

> "οὗτοι μὲν ἡμᾶς" εἶπε "χερσὶν ἐμπείροις
> σφάζουσι καὶ κτείνουσι χωρὶς αἰκείης·
> ἢν δ' εἰς ἀτέχνους ἐμπέσωμεν ἀνθρώπους,
> διπλοῦς τότ' ἔσται θάνατος. οὐ γὰρ ἐλλείψει
> τὸν βοῦν ὁ θύσων, κἂν μάγειρος ἐλλείψῃ."[114]

The fable highlights how assumptions can impede foresight, as the oxen assume that, if they kill the butchers, they will end the slaughter. The old ox recognises that this assumption is false. It is noteworthy that the fable emphasises the advanced age of the ox and his considerable life experience when it describes him as 'one of the much older ones who had ploughed the land many times' (εἷς δέ τις λίην / γέρων ἐν αὐτοῖς, πολλὰ γῆν ἀροτρεύσας: lines 4–5).[115]

A similar example of foresight is B93 in which a pack of wolves offer to make a peace treaty with a flock of sheep on the condition that they are allowed to take

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[113] The concept of foresight is epitomised in the ancient Greek myth of Prometheus, Epimetheus and Pandora: Hes. *Op.* 53-105. In modern times, the value of foresight is expressed in everyday sayings such as 'look before you leap' and 'forewarned is forearmed'. The former is an imperative; a warning to think about future consequences before taking a particular action. The latter advises that, by considering the future, one will become aware of possible risks and prepare for those risks. For a discussion of the modern principle of foresight see Slaughter 1990.

[114] ["These men slaughter and kill us with experienced hands, without violence. If we encounter inexperienced men, then our deaths will be twofold. For the man sacrificing the ox won't fail, even if as a butcher he fails."]

[115] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 48-49.

the sheep dogs away for torture.[116] While the sheep are considering this proposal, an old ram says (at lines 8–11):

> "καινῆς γε ταύτης" εἶπε "τῆς μεσιτείης.
> ἀφύλακτος ὑμῖν πῶς ἐγὼ συνοικήσω,
> δι' οὓς νέμεσθαι μηδὲ νῦν ἀκινδύνως
> ἔξεστι, καίτοι τῶν κυνῶν με τηρούντων;"[117]

The fable draws a clear contrast between the sheep and the old ram. The sheep are described as stupid (μωρή: line 5) and feeble (βληχρώδης: line 5), while the ram is described as old (γέρων: line 6) and as setting them straight (ὀρθώσας: line 7). The sheep are all too ready to agree to the treaty without considering the consequences but the old ram alerts them to the unforseen risk.

B24 also demonstrates a use of foresight. The frogs are celebrating the sun's wedding and they join in the cheerful revelry by leading a chorus of singing. Suddenly, a toad stops the party and says (at lines 4–8):

> ...] "οὐχὶ παιάνων
> τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἡμῖν, φροντίδων δὲ καὶ λύπης·
> ὃς γὰρ μόνος νῦν λιβάδα πᾶσαν αὐαίνει,
> τί μὴ πάθωμεν τῶν κακῶν, ἐὰν γήμας
> ὅμοιον αὑτῷ παιδίον τι γεννήσῃ;"[118]

The toad foresees that the consequences could be serious. He does not suggest an alternative course of action but simply warns that the future is looking bleak.

Aside from fables in which one character warns others in the community about an unforeseen risk, there are also fables in which one character uses foresight in order to preserve his/her own personal safety. In B103, for example, an old lion lies inside its cave and pretends to be ill. He then devours each of the animals that visit to enquire about his health. A wise fox refuses to enter the cave and

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[116] According to Plutarch, Demosthenes told this fable to the Athenians when, after the destruction of Thebes, Alexander the Great demanded the extradition of eight demagogues, including Demosthenes himself: see Plu. *Dem.* 23.4-5.

[117] ["What an outlandish compromise! How will I live with you unguarded? It is because of the wolves that it is not possible for me to live without danger, even though the dogs are watching over me."]

[118] ["For us this is a matter of anxieties and grief, not hymns or celebrations. Already the man dries up all the springs on his own. What hardship will we not suffer if, once he is married, he brings forth a child like himself?"]

greets the lion from outside. The lion encourages the fox to enter but the fox replies (lines 17–19):

> "σῴζοιο" φησίν· "ἦν {δ'}, ἄπειμι· συγγνώσῃ·
> πολλῶν γὰρ ἴχνη θηρίων με κωλύει,
> ὧν ἐξιόντων οὐκ ἔχεις ὅ μοι δείξεις."[119]

The fox has both cunning and foresight. He evaluates the situation accurately and avoids an unfortunate fate. A further example is B97, in which a lion invites a bull to dinner but intends to kill the bull and eat him. The bull arrives early and sees many pots, pans and sharp knives but no food except for a chicken. The bull flees to the mountains. When the lion comes across him later, he reproaches the bull for not attending the dinner. The bull responds: "I came and I will give you proof. There was no sacrifice to match the kitchen." (ὁ δ' "ἦλθον" εἶπε "καὶ τὸ σύμβολον δώσω·/ οὐκ ἦν ὅμοιον θῦμα τῷ μαγειρείῳ": lines 11–12). Last minute foresight is foresight nonetheless!

All of the examples so far have demonstrated the exercise of foresight before disaster strikes. There is only one fable in the collection that demonstrates the negative consequences of a failure to exercise provisional foresight. This is the fable of the ant and cicada (B140; discussed above in Chapter Two). In this fable, the ant is presented in a positive light for exercising foresight and working during the summertime in order to store provisions for the winter. The cicada, on the other hand, is presented in a negative light because it failed to exercise foresight and spent the summertime singing. When wintertime comes, the cicada is dying of starvation, whereas the ant has plentiful food.

Foresight, then, is portrayed as a positive attribute. It can avert potentially disastrous scenarios (such as in B21 and B93); it can warn characters of, and prepare them for, the possibility of future misfortune (such as in B24) and it can guarantee personal safety (such as in B97, B100 and B103). Survival is one of the

[119] ["I hope you get well," he says, "excuse me but I'm leaving. The tracks of many beasts deter me because you can't show me any that are leaving."] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 144.

key outcomes of the use of foresight in the fables. Thus, the moral lessons of the fables are consistent with the theme of life being both competitive and dangerous.

(xi) Truthfulness

By criticising behaviours associated with imitating, lying and self-deception, the fables indicate that truthfulness, both with oneself and others, is a virtue. At the same time, the fables suggest that being truthful is exceedingly difficult for mankind. B66 explains why this is the case:

> Θεῶν Προμηθεὺς ἦν τις, ἀλλὰ τῶν πρώτων.
> τοῦτον πλάσασθαί φασι δεσπότην ζώων
> ἄνθρωπον ἐκ γῆς· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δύω πήρας
> κρεμάσαι φέροντά φασι τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις
> κακῶν γεμούσας, τὴν πρόσω μὲν ὀθνείων,
> ἰδίων δὲ <τὴν> ὄπισθεν, ἥτις ἦν μείζων.
> διό μοι δοκοῦσι συμφορὰς μὲν ἀλλήλων
> βλέπειν ἀκριβῶς, ἀγνοεῖν δὲ τὰς οἴκοι.[120]

The fable suggests that everyone has certain moral weaknesses. At the same time, each individual is literally and metaphorically 'out of balance' because the burden of his own faults being carried on his back weighs more than the faults of others which are carried on his front. An extraordinary effort is required for man to turn around and see his own faults or, indeed, to stand aside from his own faults and those of others and thereby see his true situation.

In spite of the fact that truthfulness is difficult, there are fables that demonstrate that truthfulness can be beneficial. An old fox in B53 manages to save her own life by complying with her captor's request and telling her captor three true statements which all, ironically, express her hatred for her captor. The old fox says (lines 5–8):

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[120] [Prometheus was one of the gods but one of the first order. They say he formed man from the earth as ruler of living things. They say that from man he hung two leather pouches full of bad things, the one in front full of the bad things of others, and the one behind being the man's own. This was the larger. On which account, it seems to me, people see the misdeeds of others clearly but are unaware of those on their own doorstep.]

...] "εἴθε μέν μοι πρῶτα μὴ συνηντήκεις·
ἔπειτα <δ'>, εἴθε τυφλὸς ὢν ὑπηντήκεις·
τρίτον δ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς," εἶπε, "μὴ σύ γ' εἰς ὥρας
ἵκοιο, μὴ δὴ πάλιν ἐμοὶ συναντήσῃς."[121]

The honesty of the fox leads to a double victory: she manages to secure her own safety and to curse her captor. The fable emphasises the advanced age of the fox (line 2) which suggests that there is a direct connection between old age, wisdom and truthfulness.[122]

There is only one situation in which the value of the truth is questionable, namely, in circumstances where a client is seeking advice from a professional. In B54, for example, a eunuch consults a seer about the possibility of fathering a child. The seer tells him that although the sacrificial liver indicates that the eunuch will be a father, the eunuch's face suggests the opposite. Similarly, in B75, a physician tells his patient that he is undoubtedly dying and that he will not live another day. The physician is described as 'unskilled' (ἄτεχνος: line 1). These fables suggest that honesty is inappropriate when it insults or further weakens an already vulnerable individual.

(xii) Moderation

By portraying the negative consequences of vanity, boasting, gluttony and greed, the fables recommend the opposite behaviours, namely, modesty, moderation and prudence. We have already noted how some fables, for example, recommend moderate eating, such as the fisherman in B6 who is wise to be content with his small catch and the wolf in B100 that is content with less food so long as it maintains its freedom.

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[121] ["First, I wish you'd never met me. Second, I wish you were blind when you met me, and third, in addition to these," she said "I hope you won't live till this time next year, just so you won't meet me again."] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 79-81.

[122] A rare example of the wisdom of youth is B109 when a young crab utters the simple truth that it is impossible for a creature to behave in a manner that is contrary to its physical nature even if it is commanded to do so.

Modesty and self-knowledge are also presented as praiseworthy qualities although they are rarely portrayed in the fables. B80 is a rare example. In this fable, the owner of a camel is at a drinking party and tries to force his camel to dance to the music. The camel points out the absurdity of this request and says: "Would that I could walk down the road without ridicule let alone perform in a chorus" ("ἐμοὶ γένοιτο κἀν ὁδῷ βαίνειν / ἄνευ γέλωτος μήτι γ' ἐν χορῷ παίζειν": lines 3–4).[123] The camel is honest about its appearance and abilities. It does not deceive itself or blindly follow foolish instructions. It readily admits its limitations and, as a result, it wins our respect for its honesty and good humour.

The fables also recommend moderation in other matters, such as power and sex. In B22, a middle-aged man is the subject of ridicule because of his commitment to two love affairs, one with a young woman and one with an old one. The fable suggests that the man's behaviour is inappropriate because he is being immoderate and conducting himself in a manner that is inappropriate to his age.[124] B4 indicates that lack of distinction is safer than prominence. It describes how some small fish manage to slip out from a fisherman's net, while the large fish remain caught. The fable's epimythion explicitly relates this to a message about those with power and those who stand out among the crowd. It says (lines 6-8):

> σωτηρίη πώς ἐστι καὶ κακῶν ἔξω
> τὸ μικρὸν εἶναι· τὸν μέγαν δὲ τῇ δόξῃ
> σπανίως ἴδοις ἂν ἐκφυγόντα κινδύνου.[125]

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[123] For alternative versions of lines 3-4 see Vaio 2001: 117-118.

[124] On the value that the Romans gave to sexual moderation see Malherbe 1986: 152-153. For a discussion of the views of the Stoics see Francis 1995: 12-13.

[125] [So it is that the small were safe and out of danger. You will seldom see those with a big reputation escape from danger.] For a discussion of κινδύνου in line 8 see Vaio 2001: 20.

(xiii) Intelligence and cunning

Intelligence and cunning are qualities that are highly praised in the fables. They are qualities that are useful for self-preservation and survival in the sense that they help characters to evaluate risk,[126] to detect danger,[127] and to decide what is best for themselves and others.[128] Intelligence and cunning can also be used to outsmart an enemy,[129] to obtain food,[130] and to make the most of an unexpected situation.[131]

The animal character that is most often associated with intelligence and cunning is, of course, the fox.[132] The fox is supremely adept at using cunning. As we have already seen in B95, for example, the wily fox manages to persuade the deer to enter the lion's den twice. After the stag is killed and is being devoured by the lion, the fox then successfully deceives the lion by telling it that the deer had no heart.[133] The fox can easily detect the tricks of others because it is such a cunning creature itself. In B103, for example, which I considered above, a fox detects a lion's trick by observing that there are animal tracks leading into the lair but none coming out.

Although the fox is undoubtedly the shrewdest of Babrius' creatures, other creatures are also portrayed as intelligent and cunning when they detect trickery or deceit. In B17, a cock is described as 'shrewd' (πινυτός: line 3) for recognising a cat hiding in a bag; in B97, the bull realises that when a lion invited him to dinner, the lion actually intended for him to be the dinner; in B1,

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[126] E.g. B1, B26 and B113.
[127] E.g. B17, B97, B103 and B132.
[128] E.g. B88.
[129] E.g. B33 and B44.
[130] E.g. B77 and B95.
[131] E.g. B116.
[132] Babrius' portrayal of the fox as cunning and intelligent is consistent with Aristotle's observations of the fox in Arist. *HA* I.1.488b21.
[133] According to the Greeks and Romans, the heart was the seat of intelligence. In saying that the deer had no heart, the fox is indicating that the deer was stupid and gullible. For a detailed discussion of different versions of this fable see Duda 1948: 120-121.

a lion is shown to be perceptive when he realises that a fox is being devious in encouraging him to face a hunter, and, in B132, the sheep is unpersuaded by the wolf's suggestion that it should leave its flock so that it will not be sacrificed. Intelligence and cunning are therefore traits that can, and should be relied on at all times. They are not limited to certain types in the same way that foresight is generally limited to those who are of advanced age and experience, for example.

The consequences of failing to use one's intelligence and to detect trickery and deceit can be serious. In B130, a wolf that is tricked by a fox gets caught in a trap; in B103, all of the animals that fail to recognise the lion's trick are devoured and, in B44, the bulls that believe the lion's slanderous words are each attacked in turn. Cunning and intelligence are not only admirable and praiseworthy qualities; they are critical traits for survival.

(xiv) Learning from mistakes

The Babrian fables frequently portray characters experiencing sudden revelations and learning from their mistakes. The narrative usually begins with an assumption or false expectation, followed by a negative consequence, the admission of a mistake (such as "I should not have thought X" or "I should not have trusted X") and then a questioning of assumptions and expectations (asking questions such as "why did I think X?", "why did I do X?" or "how could I blame X?").

Assumptions and false expectations can pertain to a wide variety of matters. In B2, for example, a farmer has a preconception that the city gods will be able to help him with lost property; in B122, a wolf mistakenly assumes that people generally mean what they say and, in B115, the tortoise imagines that it will be happier if only it could fly. In some cases the consequent realisation hits a

character suddenly but, in most cases, it occurs after a character has held onto the expectation for some time.[134] A realisation always involves gaining new understanding. In some cases, a character has an opportunity to build upon this new understanding as a guide for future experience but, in other cases, the realisation comes too late.

In B2, a farmer journeys into the city to consult the gods about a lost mattock. The farmer has a preconception that the gods that dwell in the city are more truthful than those in the countryside. On arrival, the farmer hears an announcement about a reward being offered for any information about property that was stolen from the god. The farmer hears this and says (at lines 13–16):

> ...] "ὡς μάτην ἦκω·
> κλέπτας γὰρ ἄλλους πῶς <ὁ> θεὸς ἂν εἰδείη,
> ὃς τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ φῶρας οὐχὶ γινώσκει,
> ζητεῖ δὲ μισθοῦ μή τις οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων;"[135]

The farmer realises that he had a false notion about the city gods and that even their property is not secure. His statement contains two elements: an admission that he made the journey in vain, and a self-questioning statement that demonstrates that he has revised his original view.

A similar scenario can be seen in B122. In this fable, an ass becomes lame after stepping on a thorn. Seeing a wolf close by, the ass asks the wolf to remove the thorn so that it will not be in pain after it becomes a meal for the wolf and journeys to Hades. The wolf agrees to remove the thorn, viewing it as a favour to the ass rather than a risk. The ass returns the favour by kicking the wolf in the head, smashing his teeth and running away. The wolf says (at lines 14–16):

> " οἴμοι" ... "σὺν δίκῃ πάσχω·
> τί γὰρ ἄρτι χωλοὺς ἠρξάμην ἰατρεύειν,

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[134] The wolf in B16, for example, waits for a long time hoping for a meal and, in B2, the farmer journeys all the way into town to consult the city gods.

[135] ["So I have come in vain. How would the god know about other thieves if he does not know his own thieves and tries to find by a reward whether any mortal man knows about it?"]

μαθὼν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὐδὲν ἢ μαγειρεύειν;"[136]

The wolf questions his decision and admits his poor judgment.

Most realisations occur either on the point of death (as with the tortoise in B115) or after suffering an injury or some other painful experience (as in B122).[137] In all of these cases, the realisation is verbally expressed as the protagonist draws a contrast between what he/she anticipated and the actual outcome. Many of the realisations have an ironic flavour as the characters realise that they somehow brought about, or aggravated, their own misfortune.[138]

[136] ["Alas, I suffer this justly. For why just now did I begin to offer medical assistance to the lame, knowing nothing from the outset except how to be a butcher?"]

[137] See also B7, B43 and B134.

[138] The jackdaw in B137, for example, realises that it was silly to try to imitate an eagle, and the man in B143 realises that he was foolish to take pity on a snake.

III. Discussion

There are four main virtues that are extolled in the fables: moderation, truthfulness, self-reliance, and intelligence. The fables demonstrate that the individual who possesses these moral qualities and implements them has a better chance of avoiding pointless suffering, is better equipped to handle conflicts and is more likely to survive. While the fables suggest that some qualities are acquired over time (such as foresight, which tends to come with age and experience) the fables also indicate that, in general, these qualities can be learnt if the moral lessons contained in the fables are understood, remembered and put into practice.

The moral scheme underlying the fables is directed at behaviour as well as thought processes. This suggests that, for Babrius, morality was not only a question of how one behaved (such as curbing one's inclination toward greed or gluttony, for example) but was also a reflection of the quality of one's thought processes. Erroneous thought processes, such as self-deception, the failure to learn from one's mistakes and the failure to use foresight, are presented in a negative light because they rely on ill-grounded beliefs and assumptions and lead to disastrous consequences. Intelligent thought processes such as foresight and cunning are presented in a more positive light because they involve more analysis and insight and therefore lead to more favourable outcomes. The individual who approaches situations with thoughtfulness, intelligence and insight is therefore more likely to succeed.

Some of the moral lessons are specific to certain types while others are more generally applicable. Fables that portray the negative consequences of vanity and boasting are specifically directed at those who are physically attractive and powerful because, it is suggested, they are particularly prone to these moral weaknesses. Similarly, fables that portray the negative consequences of

imitating others are specifically directed at those who are envious of others, stupid, or lacking in self-knowledge. Complaining and self-deception are not type-specific; they are behaviours that a variety of character types are prone to. As far as moral virtues are concerned, some are acquired over time and with practice while others, such as moderation, are needed at all times as part of a constant repertoire.

The moral scheme of the fables applies to both the individual and the community although, generally speaking, the fables tend to be more individualistic in their outlook. Moderation, modesty, intelligence and self-reliance are highly individualistic moral traits, for example, whereas truthfulness and foresight are more community-oriented moral traits when they are applied for the benefit of others. In spite of this, the realms of private and public morality are not separate or distinct. If individuals demonstrate sound values and morals in their thinking and behaviour, these values and morals also impact on how they interact with others in society. If an individual is moderate, for example, then this impacts upon his/her dealings with others, the decisions he/she makes, and how he/she is viewed by others. It is primarily through social interaction and exchange that individuals learn about the moral values of others.

(i) The importance of internal evaluation for the moral impact of the fables

Earlier, I stated that a distinctive characteristic of Babrius' fables is their emphasis on the inner world of the characters. This feature also affects how the consequences of moral choices are portrayed. For Babrius, it is not enough to describe a disastrous outcome; Babrius also demonstrates a protagonist's emotional and psychological responses to that outcome. In B43, for example, a deer is about to be attacked by hunting dogs. At that moment, the deer realises that its earlier behaviour was excessively vain and that it is being punished for

placing a higher value on its good looks rather than its swift feet (lines 13–15). Similarly, in B122, the wolf responds to the unexpected injury with dismay. Soon after this, it accepts that its suffering is just because it too readily trusted another (lines 14–16). In fables such as these, Babrius takes his audience by the hand and leads them through the entire series of events from the protagonist's point of view. In doing so, Babrius ensures that his audience not only sees what happens to the protagonist, but *understands* and *feels* the consequences as well. The audience is meant to empathise with the protagonist in responding to the outcome. They are meant to feel the surprise, regret and dismay and to engage in a reflective reasoning process which connects these feelings to the particular moral weakness or error that is being portrayed.

This effect is fostered by Babrius' skilful use of internal evaluative strategies.[139] Rather than stepping outside the narrative and telling the audience what to think about particular characters (external evaluation), Babrius presents all of the necessary information in the narrative itself and then guides his audience toward certain conclusions. Babrius uses a variety of narrative strategies in order to achieve this effect, such as direct speech; accounts of his protagonist's thought processes; detailed descriptions; vocabulary that expresses emotion, and his emphasis on the psychology of the characters rather than events and outcomes (see Chapters Two and Three above). From the audience's point of view, this style of storytelling is more satisfying and engaging because the audience is required to take a more active role in evaluating the characters and drawing conclusions about the information for themselves.[140]

Some scholars hold the view that Babrius' use of narrative strategies results in the moral aspect of the fables being overshadowed.[141] In my view, Babrius' use of narrative strategies makes the moral impact of the fables all the stronger

[139] Tannen 1982a: 4.
[140] Tannen 1982b: 8-9.
[141] Nøjgaard 1967: 192; Perry 1965: xxv; Holzberg 2002: 55.

because the audience is more engaged and involved in the narrative. Babrius first captures the imagination of his audience by portraying events that inspire delight and curiosity. The audience then becomes progressively more involved in the narrative as it sees the events from the protagonist's point of view. The moral message then strikes the audience with full force, precisely at the point when the audience has identified completely with the protagonist on an emotional level. At that moment, the audience becomes a fellow sufferer with the protagonist. This narrative strategy makes it much harder for the audience to avoid the emotional impact of the negative outcome and to dismiss the moral message as personally inapplicable. In other words, it is much harder for the audience to say "we would never fall prey to the same moral weakness as that character."[142]

Babrius' emphasis on the emotional and psychological impact of moral choices represents an important departure from the approach taken in other fable collections. In the *Augustana,* for example, "[t]he protagonists are interested in a means–end type of action; their action and ethical thinking focuses on the particular circumstances and the ways to produce the desired outcome."[143] We have already seen that Babrius' protagonists engage in more second-order reasoning, by reflecting on the goals and rules which were operative in their decision to pursue a particular course of action. In addition to this, Babrius' fables are less likely to end with a description of a negative outcome but are more likely to track a protagonist as he/she progresses from a lack of self knowledge or an incorrect interpretation of a situation to full realisation and understanding. This suggests that the portrayal of ethical thinking and reasoning processes in Babrius' fables is more complex and nuanced than in other fable collections.

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[142] Babrius' use of exhortation (such as in B74.15) and the reinforcement of morals (such as in B57.12-14) also ensures that the moral is made personally relevant.
[143] Zafiropoulos 2001: 181.

(ii) Some unexpected findings and some noteworthy absences

Some of Babrius' moral virtues are less conventional than others.[144] It is surprising, for example, that honesty is not portrayed as an altogether positive moral trait. The Babrian fables emphasise the importance of honesty with oneself more than honesty with others. The consequences of deceiving oneself are far more serious than the consequences of lying to others. In the fables, self-deception attracts negative reactions such as ridicule, anger and violence. Dishonesty, in contrast, does not necessarily lead to negative consequences and, in some cases, it leads to substantial gains. The emphasis on honesty with oneself in the fables suggests that Babrius regards self-knowledge as foremost. This finding directly contradicts Nøjgaard's view that Babrius regards self-knowledge as a perfectly useless attribute in a world which denies the virtue of personal strength.[145] Babrius regards self-knowledge as crucial. It would be surprising if he did not, given the prominence of this idea in Greek philosophy as well as in other fable collections.[146]

Knowledge of others is also important, particularly for survival but it is secondary to self-knowledge. For Babrius, the core of self-knowledge is an accurate assessment of one's qualities and abilities. Self-deceptive and imitative forms of behaviour block the path to self-knowledge because they typically involve an overestimation or misjudgement of one's qualities and abilities.[147] Self-deception, in particular, provides Babrius with many opportunities for satire (ridiculing the individual who tries to fool him/herself) as well as irony (when the audience is aware of something that the protagonist is deliberately

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[144] Moderation, for example, is a conventional topic of ethical and moral instruction that was long recognised in Greek thought. See Zafiropoulos 2001: 177 and Morgan 2007: 336.

[145] Nøjgaard 1967: 365.

[146] Zafiropoulos 2001: 177-179.

[147] Interestingly, characters are never portrayed underestimating their abilities. Perhaps this behaviour was not common enough to warrant a fable or perhaps it was viewed as unproblematic.

ignoring or overlooking). In this way, the fables reinforce the notion that self-deception is worthy of social ridicule and contempt.

The depiction of complaining as a negative trait is also unconventional in the sense that this topic is not prominent in other fable collections[148] and it does not feature in proverbs, *gnomai* or *exempla* from the same period.[149] Babrius' fable collection is unsympathetic to acts of complaining, regardless of the basis on which complaints are made. Furthermore, complainants are never successful in altering their situation. Nøjgaard's approach would suggest that the reason for this is that Babrius seeks to show the necessity of resignation.[150] This interpretation would have more merit if the fables were advocating meekness and resignation in the face of clear cases of injustice. A careful examination of the fables reveals that the moral message is more subtle than this. In fact, we find that the injustices that are complained of are only perceived injustices, not real ones. In B128, for example, the sheep complain because the sheep-dog appears to receive better food than they do. They do not recognise that the sheep-dog performs an important role in protecting them and that they require a different form of sustenance to the dog. Similarly, in B105, the wolf complains because the lion has snatched a sheep that it has just stolen. The wolf has itself committed an injustice but it still feels justified in complaining when an injustice is committed against it.

In short, characters are inclined to complain about situations that they have no moral right to complain about, either because they are receiving a benefit (B128), because they are as morally degraded as the individual they are

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[148] Zafiropoulos does not mention complaining or blaming others in his study of inner qualities with disastrous effects in the *Augustana* (see Zafiropoulos 2001: 147-156). Of the eight fables in Babrius' collection that depict complaining, only two are found in the *Augustana* (P143[=B97] and P124[=B77]) and only one is found in Phaedrus' collection (Ph.1.13[=B77]).

[149] Morgan discusses 'carping' as a behaviour that is commented on negatively in proverbs, but carping at others is different, I think, to complaining that one has less than others or that one has lost a benefit (see Morgan 2007: 38).

[150] See Nøjgaard 1967: 354.

complaining about (B105), or because they have contributed to their own misfortune (B142). It is true that none of the complainants have the power to change their situation, but in each case, the nature of the situation is such that the characters must accept certain terms and rules. B128, for example, shows that, if the defenceless want to rely on protection from the strong, then they must accept the terms under which that protection is granted; B105 shows that, if one is a criminal, one cannot expect to be treated honestly by others, and B142 shows that one cannot expect to live a long and prosperous life if one has a role in activities that threaten life.

On the topic of trust and self-reliance, Babrius' outlook is also somewhat surprising. Instead of promoting trustworthiness as an absolute moral virtue, the fables adopt a more cynical approach by presenting others as unlikely to be just, honest or fair, and therefore recommending that individuals refrain from trusting others. The untrustworthy are rarely punished and there is no immediate justice for acts of betrayal,[151] violence[152] or deception (whether deliberate or inadvertent).[153] In most of the fables, the untrustworthy prosper and enjoy their ill-gotten gains.[154] Those who trust others suffer the consequences.[155] Given the nature of these circumstances, it is portrayed as unwise to rely on others. The more cunning strategy is to be wary of others and to work hard to gain the trust of others only when there is a prospect of gain for oneself.[156]

There are a number of reasons why the fables might avoid recommending honesty as an absolute virtue. The first is that the fables present an essentially negative view of life in that it is characterised by conflict and suffering. In this

[151] E.g. B50 and B98.
[152] E.g. B67 and B98.
[153] E.g. B130.
[154] See B67, B95 and B130.
[155] See B95, B98 and B130.
[156] This is the approach taken by the wily fox in B95, B103 and B130.

context, positive and absolute moral virtues such as honesty are naïve and out of place. The struggle to survive places so much pressure on absolute moral virtues such as honesty that, in reality, they cannot be maintained. In this context, it is critical to develop the ability to recognise when another individual is trustworthy and when he or she is not. As for one's own trustworthiness, this will depend on the situation and whether survival is the overriding objective. Morgan describes this approach as 'situational ethics'; a model of ethics that establishes rules "that do not apply equally to everyone in every situation, but have more or less force depending on circumstances."[157]

As Morgan observes, general rules prohibiting killing, stealing, lying and sexual exploitation of others "do not emerge from Greco–Roman popular wisdom", even though these rules are common to all of the six largest contemporary world faiths.[158] Killing, stealing and lying are frequently portrayed in the Babrian fables.[159] Sexual exploitation is less common but it is hinted at.[160] According to Morgan, the reason for the absence of such rules is that popular morality in this period relied on situational and executive ethics rather than universal and absolute rules. Rather than designating precisely what an individual could or could not do, popular morality outlined rules that had more or less force depending on the situation.[161] This does not mean that the ethical system of Babrius' time was basic or ineffective. On the contrary, as Morgan says:

> An ethical system built on executive and situational ethics is a sophisticated one…[it] expresses a high level of confidence in the community to work out its problems. If the central themes of our material paint a picture of a harsh, combative world, the importance of executive ethics shows its positive aspect:

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[157] Morgan 2007: 180.

[158] Morgan 2007: 180.

[159] For examples of killing see B6, B13, B27, B31, B37, B38, B44, B89, B95, B98, B115, B118, B123, B138 and B143; for stealing see B78, B79 and B105; for lying see B57, B81, B95 and B126.

[160] See B116.

[161] Morgan 2007: 180.

> that those who live in it can aspire, on the whole, to discuss and settle, or at least to contain their differences.[162]

(iii) Babrius' moral message

Nøjgaard claims that Babrius' core message is that man should accept his place in the world.[163] In my view, this is not an accurate description. Although man is portrayed as living in a world that is characterised by conflict and suffering, he does not always have to resign himself to suffering.[164] Through his fables, Babrius demonstrates that man has the ability to make individual moral choices that will improve his chances of survival and his ability to negotiate difficult circumstances. More specifically, by being moderate, truthful, self-reliant and intelligent, the fables show that all men, regardless of their status or power, can play an active role in shaping their lives and thereby improving their chances of survival and quality of life.

My findings also oppose Nøjgaard's view of Babrius as an advocate of the *status quo*.[165] To suggest that the moral scheme of the fables reflects Babrius' social position is misleading, first, because it relies on an assumption about Babrius' social status; second, because it overlooks those fables that present a contradictory view, particularly those fables that demonstrate that the weak can be victorious over the strong;[166] and, third, because there is no evidence that Babrius' moral scheme advocates the *status quo* any more or less than popular ethical material from this period more generally. As Morgan has observed:

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[162] Morgan 2007: 182.

[163] Nøjgaard 1967: 365.

[164] Nøjgaard focuses on Babrius' political morals to support his point, particularly the epimythia that accompany B39 and B40 (see Nøjgaard 1967: 312). It is problematic that Nøjgaard relies on epimythia to support his argument because of their doubtful authenticity. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there were certain fables in antiquity that were much more explicit in advising people to recognise their place and not to disrupt the social hierarchy. Maximus of Tyre, for example, uses the fable of the parts of the body to reinforce the notion that everyone has their place and function within the city state (Max.Tyr. 15.4-5) and Dio Chrysostom uses the fable of the bee hive to speak of the place of the 'drones' in society (D.Chr. 48.14-16). It is notable that neither of these fables appears in Babrius' collection.

[165] Nøjgaard 1967: 353.

[166] See B53, B69, B96, B107 and B112.

> Most, though not all social strife is presented as the result of inequality between agents. At the same time, inequality is presented as inevitable, and even approved as part of the natural order. Proverbs and fables hold this view as strongly as gnomai and exempla.[167]

This suggests that the moral scheme of Babrius' fable collection must be viewed in the context of the other ethical literature of the period and that it is not possible to draw conclusions about Babrius' personal and political ideology solely from his fables.

Nøjgaard assumes that Babrius' fables seek to reinforce the morals and values of the upper classes because Babrius himself was a member of the royal household. Even if Babrius was a member of the royal household (and, as we have already discussed, the evidence for this is tenuous) it is not necessarily the case that Babrius' fables reflect an upper class ideology. According to Morgan, certain genres of ethical material reflect the moral views of a wide spectrum of Roman society in the early Roman Empire, including both the lower and upper classes.[168] Fables are one example of such a genre. Morgan maintains that these genres originated in, or percolated to, the lower reaches of Roman society even though our evidence for them comes from higher-level sources.[169] If this is the case, and I believe that it is, then Babrius' fable collection provides an insight into the moral values that were important to the majority, not just to the upper classes.

In order to explore this further, it is necessary to consider Babrius' intended audience, the 'reach' of the Babrian fables and the nature of fable material itself. It is probable that Babrius' fable collection was written primarily for the educated and literate, which would have constituted a very small segment of the population.[170] Of that number, very few would have had direct access to a copy of Babrius' fables. This is because works were not 'published' as such and,

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[167] Morgan 2007: 164.
[168] Morgan 2007: 4.
[169] Morgan 2007: 2.
[170] See Morgan 2007: 3; also Johnson and Parker 2009.

in some cases, copies of texts were available only if purchased.[171] Even so, Parker suggests that poetic texts were intended to be heard and read out loud, thus reaching a larger audience than the poet's immediate circle of friends.[172] There is some evidence that Babrius' fables reached a larger audience through literary education. Earlier, I discussed the *Tabulae Ceratae Assendelftianae* found at Palmyra which indicate that Babrius' fables were being used by a schoolboy to practise and learn Greek in the third century CE. I also discussed the *Hermeneumata* and the connection between the fables and rhetorical training, as seen in the works of Quintilian, Aphthonius, Hermogenes and Nicostratus. This suggests that Babrius' fables were not familiar only to an élite few but circulated more widely in oral form throughout different classes of people in society.[173] It is possible that a fable collection such as Babrius' was particularly suited to this wider form of circulation since, as Goldhill suggests, certain works such as handbooks of anecdotes straddled the boundary between the oral and literate. It is likely that such works were read aloud so that the stories could be retold and circulated orally at symposia and other gatherings.[174]

According to one view, the dispersal of moral teaching by the educated upper classes among the lower classes is a means for the upper classes to maintain power by encouraging the lower classes to accept and adopt moral values and standards that are acceptable to the upper classes. The problem with this view, as Morgan observes, is that it does not allow for the possibility of influences flowing in the reverse direction.[175] There are a number of fables in Babrius' collection that are concerned with the treatment of the lowly by those who have

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[171] Martial states that a copy of his book of epigrams cost five denarii (a working man's weekly wage): Mart. 1.117.15-17. On the distribution of texts see Potter 1999: 29-30. Skidmore points out that the reading of books would have been an arduous task, because of the difficulty of handling the roll and deciphering the text (Skidmore 1996: 108).

[172] See Parker 2009.

[173] On the role of speeches as a means of delivering moral instruction in Roman society see Malherbe 1986: 68-79.

[174] Goldhill 2009.

[175] Morgan 2007: 4.

more power and strength.[176] Phaedrus' prologue to his third book says that the fable was invented so that the slave could express his thoughts but elude censure (lines 34–37). In the plays of Aristophanes, fables are told by slaves and farmers as well as by priestesses, revered poets and citizens.[177] Since fables could be used as a form of speech by the lower as well as upper classes, it is quite possible that, in the process of collecting and retelling fables, Babrius has contributed to a process of communicating and reinforcing certain moral values up as well as down the social scale.[178] This in turn makes it unlikely that Babrius' fable collection only represents the views of upper class members of society.

(iv) Applying the morals

Given the flexibility that exists in a system based on situational ethics, how was Babrius' moral scheme intended to work in practice? Morgan suggests that popular stories such as fables reveal a small 'core' of ideas which everyone in the Roman Empire was expected to share.[179] This suggests that in the process of encountering fables, whether in private reading, the schoolroom or through the oral tradition, individuals were being taught to recognise that the fables represented positive and negative examples of behaviour that should be imitated or rejected.[180] By extracting the 'core' moral qualities from these stories, individuals were being encouraged to recognise that moderation, honesty with oneself, self-reliance and intelligence can help one to avoid suffering and to survive. The fables simultaneously promote and reinforce these core moral qualities as shared cultural values for all individuals in society. In this sense,

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[176] For examples of sympathetic attitudes toward those who are unfortunate see B12, B35, B52 and B108. Fables that encourage those with power to be gentle and kind are B18, B51 and B102. For fables that depict 'lowly' trades such as fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers and fishermen see B4, B6, B9, B21, B42 and B138.

[177] See the author's article (Pertsinidis 2009).

[178] See Morgan 2007: 5.

[179] Morgan 2007: 183.

[180] On the use of examples in Roman moral education see Skidmore 1996: 16-21.

fables also formed part of a broader process of education and socialization by which each generation learnt a system of practical ethics that could help them in life.

In addition to this 'core' of ideas, Morgan suggests that popular sayings and stories also encapsulated peripheral ideas which an individual could choose to accept or reject. The decision to reject or accept these peripheral ideas could rest on personal choice or factors such as class, region and gender.[181] In encountering these sorts of moral issues in the fables, an audience would be expected to engage actively with the moral teaching; to reflect on the moral content as representing 'ethically ponderable ideas',[182] and to think about whether and how the moral related to their personal circumstances. In this sense, the moral content of these fables is open: there is no definitive moral to be extracted. Instead, each individual is invited to reflect on the story in a considered but exploratory way.[183] This involves a degree of effort of perception on the part of the audience. The metaphor of the fable is morally suggestive but it is up to the audience to grapple with that suggestiveness; to embrace the opportunity to extract meaning from the story, and to make it their own.[184] The fable can be viewed as a tool for moral reasoning, but the person wielding it must use their own judgment in applying it.[185] The result is a highly sophisticated ethical system that is flexible but also cogent.[186]

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[181] Morgan 2007: 183.
[182] See Morgan 2007: 18.
[183] Blackham 1985: xiii.
[184] See Carlson 1993: 7.
[185] Seneca actively encouraged people to develop their own maxims and moral teachings from their own experiences in life: *Epistle,* 33.5-9. This supports the notion of morality as a flexible system that required constant engagement and reflection.
[186] Morgan 2007: 184.

PART III

Part III of this thesis will demonstrate that Babrius' fables yield a number of important insights into social relationships and the understanding of emotion in Babrius' own time. Chapter Five analyses Babrius' outlook on relationships, especially the relationship between mortals and gods and relationships involving friends and family. It offers new perspectives on Babrius' approach by critiquing the conclusions of previous scholars and offering alternative views. Chapter Six presents for the first time a study of emotion-terms in Babrius' fable collection. It examines a number of emotion-terms including θυμός, ἔρως, χάρις and φόβος. It analyses how and when these emotion-terms are used and how the emotions that they represent are conceptualised and portrayed. The use of emotion-terms in Babrius' fables is then compared with other instances from ancient Greek and Roman literature as well as with our modern understanding of certain emotions as it is derived from cognitive and social psychology. The object of Chapter Six is to open new avenues of study into the way in which emotions are conceptualised and portrayed in the literature from this period.

CHAPTER FIVE: RELATIONSHIPS

In this chapter, I will argue that Babrius' fables are a useful source for the study of how certain social relationships were viewed in the first to second centuries CE. Contrary to the opinions of previous scholars, I will argue that the fables represent the views of the majority of the populace rather than an élite group. My argument has its basis in the broad circulation of fables throughout society and the popular nature of the fables. It also stems from the lack of evidence concerning Babrius' social status and the questionability of the view that Babrius' fables reflect the ideology of those in power. I propose that, while Babrius' fables can be read as having an agenda, it is primarily a moral and ethical one, not one that is primarily concerned with the maintenance of élite power and status.

Morgan's study of popular morality in the early Roman Empire makes some important observations about fable collections as works of popular morality and the coherence of the moral structures that they represent.[1] Her discussion of fable collections from the early Roman Empire also involves an outline of the themes of friendship, the gods and family.[2] This chapter will venture further: firstly, by analysing Nøjgaard's account of these topics specifically in relation to Babrius; secondly, by engaging in a detailed analysis of the attitudes that are conveyed in the Babrian fables; thirdly, by comparing these attitudes with other sources of popular morality as well as philosophical literature from the same period; and, fourthly, by demonstrating that Babrius' views about family, social relationships and religion are consistent with the broader moral themes of the collection and are likely to be representative of views that were widely held.

[1] Morgan 2007: 183-190.
[2] Morgan 2007: 68-70, 75-79.

In Chapter Two, I examined the connection between the genres of satire and comedy and the fables. That chapter highlighted the fact that our fable author has a vested interest in portraying behaviour in a particular way to suit his satirical, comic and moral purposes. How then can we justifiably regard any form of behaviour that is depicted in the fables as potential source material? There are two approaches to this question. First, I maintain that fables function as metaphors for forms of human behaviour and that, in order for the fable to be successful as a metaphor it must bear some relation to real behaviour if it is to be understood and interpreted. There is little doubt that satire and comedy add an element of exaggeration, amplifying or enlarging a small but significant detail (as in a cartoon, for example), but, as with all satire and comedy, there is also an element of realism. In addition to this, some forms of behaviour are portrayed repeatedly throughout the fable collection in a similar way, and it is these forms of behaviour that form the focus of this study. There are, of course, inconsistencies and exceptions, but these do not invalidate the general picture; rather, they confirm the complexity of the picture along with its overall coherence. A further point is that we are able to compare the views expressed in the fables with views expressed in other fable collections as well as other 'popular' sources such as proverbs. In most cases, there is a close correlation in the views expressed. This finding supports my conclusion that the fables represent majority, rather than minority, views.

I. Gods and mortals

The Olympian gods that feature most often in the Babrian fables are Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Poseidon and Aphrodite.[3] In the Babrian fables, these gods inhabit a divine realm that is disconnected from, and largely uninterested in, that of mortals. The gods marry each other and hold celebrations (B24 and B70), they engage in sporting events and contests (B59 and B68) and they amuse

[3] Zeus appears in B58, B68, B127 and B142; Apollo appears in B68; Athena appears in B59; Poseidon appears in B59; and Aphrodite appears in B10 and B32.

themselves by holding beauty pageants for animals and birds (B56 and B72). The Olympian gods interact with mortals only on rare occasions, usually for their own amusement or to deliver a message or judgment (B10 and B32). They also interact directly with animals (B24, B48 and B56). In spite of the division between the mortal and immortal realms, the Olympian gods are portrayed as exercising a powerful and mostly positive influence in the universe. Zeus is portrayed in a particularly favourable light. He is described as the creator of mankind (B59.3–4) and the provider of good things to mankind (B58.1–2). He is said to be responsible for ensuring that the wicked are punished for their wrongdoings (B127). He is also portrayed as an amicable god who engages in a playful archery contest with Apollo (B68) and listens to complaints (B142). Other Olympian gods such as Athena and Poseidon create gifts for the good of mankind (B59) while Aphrodite and Eros inspire erotic love (B32).

Heroes, demigods and personified abstractions are more problematic in terms of their role in the universe and the impact they have on mankind. Prometheus, for example, is credited with the creation of mankind but he also assigns moral faults to each individual (B66). Similarly, Hermes is responsible for distributing lies, deceit and wickedness among the different races of men (B57).[4] Heroes intervene in mortal affairs only when they are entreated to do so (B20). Even then, they do not bring good to mankind, as a hero explains to a pious worshipper in B63 (lines 7–12):

> "ἀγαθὸν μέν," εἶπεν, "οὐδ' ἄν <ἕν> τις ἡρώων,
> ὦ τᾶν, παράσχοι· ταῦτα τοὺς θεοὺς αἴτει·
> κακῶν δὲ πάντων, ἅτε σύνεστιν ἀνθρώποις,
> δοτῆρες ἡμεῖς. τοιγὰρ εἰ κακῶν χρῄζεις,
> εὔχου· παρέξω πολλά, κἂν ἓν αἰτήσῃς.
> πρὸς ταῦτα λοιπὸν αὐτὸς οἶδας ἢν θύσῃς."[5]

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[4] In B117 Hermes teaches a man not to judge the gods. Hermes also confounds mankind by being both a helper and a trickster: see B119.

[5] ["Not even one good thing would any of us heroes provide, sir. For these things, ask the gods. But for all manner of bad things, inasmuch as they dwell among mankind, we are the providers. Indeed, if you want evils, just pray. I will provide many for you, even if you ask for one. In future, you yourself know if you should sacrifice with a view to these things."] I have adopted

Personified abstractions are even less inclined to be favourable. Nemesis, the personification of 'divine retribution', exacts punishment for vanity and excessive anger (B43 and B11) while Fortune is only motivated to protect man out of self-interest (B49).[6] Personifications of positive values such as Truth are said to dwell far away from civilization (B126).[7]

Humans are portrayed as having limited understanding of gods, demigods and other immortal beings. Humans are frequently portrayed performing sacrifices and making offerings to the gods[8] but these acts are rarely performed with the appropriate intention and understanding. For example, humans expect the gods to be omniscient (B2), to impose justice immediately (B127), and to respond promptly and favourably to prayers and supplications.[9] These expectations are generally unfulfilled because humans are portrayed as worshipping the gods in inappropriate ways. Humans pray for help before trying to solve their own problems (B20); they pray for help rashly and without proper consideration (B23); they pray to the wrong deities and incur lavish expense (B63); they express anger with the gods when their requests are not met (B119); they criticise the gods for being unjust,[10] and they express gratitude to the gods for gifts for which the gods are not responsible (B10). By depicting futile and inappropriate forms of worship, the fables portray a breakdown in communication between the divine and human realms. Far from the time of the golden race when mortals and immortals lived in harmony and communicated

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Vaio's alternative rendering of line seven in order to solve the problem with scansion in Luzzatto's text (see Vaio 2001: 87).

[6] In B49, Fortune protects a man from falling into a well because she does not want to be blamed for a mishap, while B136 demonstrates that man cannot escape or change his fortune.

[7] Natural elements such as the Sun, North Wind and Sea can also make life pleasant, uncomfortable or dangerous for man (see B18, B24 and B71).

[8] E.g. B34, B37, B42 and B141.

[9] E.g. B10, B20, B63, B78 and B119.

[10] See B117. In this fable, a man witnesses a shipwreck and accuses the gods of unjustly killing the men on board the ship who were pious. As he is speaking, an ant bites the man's leg and he tramples on the entire nest. At that moment, Hermes appears and strikes the man with his wand. He tells the man to tolerate the judgment of the gods in the same way that the ants tolerated his judgment of them.

directly with each other,[11] the fables suggest that there is a lack of amity between gods and mortals. The gods express anger with humans (B10); they abandon humans for being dishonest (B126); they express concern about potential maltreatment by humans (B30), and they inform humans that their prayers are inappropriate (B63). The fables often portray mortals as asleep: a metaphor for mankind's lack of attention and awareness. In B49, for example, a workman has fallen asleep beside a well and is oblivious to the danger of falling into the well. The workman hears the voice of Fortune when she says to the man: "You there, won't you wake up?" ("οὗτος, οὐκ ἐγερθήσῃ...;": line 3). In this low state of awareness, mankind is ill-equipped to be confronted directly with the gods, so the gods communicate with mankind indirectly through dreams,[12] voices (B71), seers (B54) and images (B119). Mankind's lack of understanding of the gods may explain why Hermes plays such a significant role in the fables as Hermes acts as an intermediary between the divine and the human worlds delivering messages and objects to mankind.[13] The aetiological fables also serve as a means to educate mankind about the divine realm and to explain matters that are otherwise mysterious to humans. B127, for example, explains that divine justice is often slower than expected because of the way in which the matters come to the attention of Zeus; B58 explains that mankind is bereft of all blessings except hope because when man was given all good things in a sealed jar, he could not restrain himself from opening it, and B66 explains that men cannot clearly see their own faults because they are so focussed on the faults of others.

Nøjgaard describes Babrius' attitude toward the gods as one of "armed neutrality".[14] He suggests that Babrius views the gods of Olympus with

[11] See Babrius' Prologue I, lines 12-13.
[12] E.g. B10, B30, B49, B63 and B136.
[13] We see this in B30, B57, B117, B119 and B127. Hermes himself can play a negative or positive role, helping Zeus to deliver justice as in B127, or contributing to the wickedness of mankind, as in B57.
[14] Nøjgaard 1967: 358.

deference only when they appear as pure concepts. As soon as the Olympian gods meddle in human affairs, Babrius adopts a satiric tone and ensures that the gods are returned to their rightful place.[15] I agree that Babrius is deferential towards the Olympian gods as 'pure concepts'. Babrius portrays the home of the gods as distant from the mortal realm and the lives of the Olympian gods as joyous and peaceful.[16] Throughout the fables, the gods are referred to by their formal and reverent epithets: Apollo in B68 as 'the Bright One' (Φοῖβος: line 3), Athena in B59 as Pallas (Παλλάς: line 4), and Aphrodite in B32 as 'Cypris, the mother of desire' (Κύπρις, ἡ πόθων μήτηρ: line 2). The gods are portrayed as possessing their traditional powers and abilities: Apollo is skilled in archery (B68), Athena and Poseidon have exceptional creative skills and abilities (B59), and Aphrodite has the power to inspire erotic love (B10 and B32). Zeus is regarded with particular reverence, due to his role in nurturing life,[17] his ability to bestow goods upon mankind (B58), his role in administering justice (B127), and his mighty size and power (B68). In all of these respects, Babrius' attitude toward the gods is traditional and respectful. But I submit that it is incorrect to interpret Babrius as otherwise tending toward satire of religion *per se*. Only one of the Olympian gods is portrayed as directly meddling in human affairs (Aphrodite), and she is the only Olympian god whose influence on human life is the subject of wit and ridicule. In one fable, for example, Aphrodite appears to a slave girl in a dream and expresses her anger that the slave-girl's master mistakenly thinks that she is beautiful (B10). Aphrodite is annoyed by the man's infatuation because it nullifies her role and results in the man failing to pay her proper reverence. Aphrodite's wounded pride encourages the reader to view the goddess with amusement. In a second fable, Aphrodite and Eros join forces

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[15] Nøjgaard 1967: 358.

[16] Wedding celebrations, festivities and laughter are common in the realm of the gods (see B24, B56 and B70) and there is no conflict between gods, as there is between mortals. Even the negative judgment of Momus is downplayed in B59 compared to the *Augustana* version of the same fable (P100).

[17] See B59.3-4 where Zeus is described as the creator of mankind, and B142.3 when the oak trees refer to Zeus as 'father' (πατήρ).

to help an amorous weasel wed a handsome young man (B32). Aphrodite and Eros are defeated when, in spite of their attempts to disguise the weasel as a beautiful woman, the weasel behaves according to its true nature. The fable overturns normal expectations concerning the overwhelming power of Aphrodite and Eros and it highlights the supremacy of Nature (Φύσις) instead. Neither of these fables expresses *religious* satire; rather, it is Aphrodite's power to inspire erotic desire (ἔρως) that is attacked with wit and humour. The other examples that Nøjgaard cites in support of the view that Babrius takes an irreverent attitude towards religion do not involve the Olympian gods.[18]

Nøjgaard goes on to say that Babrius' religious satire is a product of his social rank. He argues that Babrius does not ridicule the ruling classes but is satirical about the practices of the common mob.[19] Nøjgaard cites examples of fables in which Babrius is said to satirise the religious malpractices of peasants, slave-girls, Thebans (as prototypical 'provincial' types) and cattle-drivers.[20] Babrius is also said to stigmatise popular religion by telling vulgar tales that demonstrate the futility of prayer, divination, augury and private worship, particularly concerning the cult of heroes. Nøjgaard claims that Babrius uses satire to defend the social order because he viewed religious devotion as a subversive activity of the lower classes.

One problem with this view is that it places undue emphasis on class issues and does not take into account the fact that satire of inappropriate religious practices is not uncommon in other popular ethical material from this period

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[18] Nøjgaard 1967: 357. B117 involves Hermes, B119 involves a wooden image of Hermes and B71 involves the Sea. This last fable resembles a *gnomai* from Publilius Syrus which says that a man who is shipwrecked twice should not blame Neptune: Pub. *Sent.* 331 (in Duff and Duff (eds.) 1934).

[19] Nøjgaard 1967: 357-358.

[20] Nøjgaard 1967: 359.

and that it is not restricted to Babrius' fable collection alone.[21] Proverbs, like fables, circulated among a number of different classes in society[22] and like the Babrian fables, they tend to be critical of certain religious practices and particularly those who fail to correctly observe religious rituals. For example, the proverb 'By unwashed hands' (Ἀνίπτοις χερσίν) refers to those who perform sacrifices with unclean hands;[23] The 'Lindian mode of sacrifice' (Λίνδιοι τὴν θυσίαν) refers to those who sacrifice to Herakles while shouting abuse,[24] and the 'Rhodian mode of sacrifice' (Ῥόδιοι τὴν θυσίαν) refers to people who blaspheme during sacrifices.[25] A number of other proverbs emphasise that prayer must be conducted appropriately. The proverb 'Pray upon an ox' (Κατὰ βοὸς εὔχου) indicates that prayer should be accompanied by a substantial sacrifice,[26] while the proverb 'You pray upon an ox for nothing' (Μηδὲν κατὰ βοὸς εὔξῃ) indicates that prayers will not always be answered no matter how great the sacrifice.[27] Other proverbs express scepticism about divination and augury. An example is the proverb 'Many carry a wand but few are inspired' (Πολλοί τοι ναρθηκοφόροι, παῦροι δέ τε Βάκχοι) which is said to be a proverb for those who have false opinions,[28] and the proverb 'Many stone casters but few prophets' (Πολλοὶ θριοβόλοι, παῦροι δέ τε μάντιες ἄνδρες).[29] The proverb 'The owl has flown away' (Γλαὺξ διέπτατο) is said to refer to those who feel happy about an omen.[30] Babrius' fable about the inability of heroes to bestow good things upon mankind is also reflected in the ancient proverb "I am not of these heroes" (Οὐκ εἰμὶ τούτων τῶν ἡρώων). This proverb

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[21] Morgan engages in a survey of the views of religion presented in proverbs, fables, *gnomai* and *exempla* and she concludes that works of popular morality recognise the importance of the gods and are "more sceptical about religion, all four genres recognizing that wonders and omens are not always easy to interpret and not all priests and soothsayers are honest." (Morgan 2007: 161).
[22] Morgan refers to the proverb as the "epitome of popular ethical material" (Morgan 2007: 30).
[23] Diogenianus 1.43 in CPG: 187.
[24] Zenobius 4.95 in CPG: 113.
[25] Diogenianus 7.96 in CPG: 303.
[26] Diogenianus 5.90 in CPG: 268.
[27] Diogenianus 6.55 in CPG: 278.
[28] Zenobius, 5.77 in CPG: 151.
[29] Zenobius, 5.75 in CPG: 150.
[30] Diogenianus 3.93 in CPG: 231.

is said to be directed at those who wish to do well "for the heroes are more prepared to do harm than to do good" (οἱ γὰρ ἥρωες κακοῦν ἕτοιμοι μᾶλλον, ἢ εὐεργετεῖν).[31]

In both proverbs and fables, the implied criticism is directed at the behaviour in question rather than at the class or status of the person performing the religious activity. The proverbs make generalised statements about religious practice that could be applied to anyone. In a similar way, the fables focus on different forms of inappropriate behaviour associated with religious practice. B10 ridicules a slave-girl not primarily because she is of low status and is praying to Aphrodite but because she is thanking Aphrodite for gifts that have not been bestowed by the goddess. B2 ridicules a farmer not primarily because he belongs to the lower classes (in fact, he is wealthy enough to own both property and slaves) but because he mistakenly thinks that the city gods can help him. B63 ridicules an ordinary, pious man not because of his piety but because he is making lavish sacrifices to a hero rather than a god. By satirising religious malpractices, the fables reinforce social norms. In this way, Babrius' use of satire intersects with his moral purpose; by satirising man's lack of connectivity with the gods and his lack of understanding regarding proper forms of worship, the fables illustrate the importance of worshipping the gods in the appropriate way.

Furthermore, if Babrius' attitude towards religion in the fables reflects his alleged social rank, we would expect to see some similarity between the fables and the writings of other contemporaneous authors on the subject of popular religious practice, particularly high-ranking authors who were concerned with moral instruction. The exempla contained in *Memorable Words and Deeds*, for example, were collected and written up by Valerius Maximus, a Roman citizen from an educated background. This work was intended for an upper class

[31] Zenobius 5.60 in CPG: 145. This proverb is spoken by Menander in the Synepheboi (fragment number 394 in Koerte (ed.) 1959: 140).

audience in that it is explicitly dedicated to the Emperor Tiberius[32] and it was also intended for moral instruction.[33] Yet there is very little similarity between Valerius' treatment of religious practice and Babrius'. Valerius criticises high level religious officials, rather than members of the lower classes, for failing to properly observe religious practices.[34] Ordinary people who demonstrate that they value religion are lauded, not satirised.[35] Even foreigners are regarded with respect so long as they are pious.[36] Auspices are also treated with more seriousness than they are in the fables.[37] On the whole, Babrius' fables express a more satirical attitude toward certain religious practices than do Valerius' exempla. This may reflect a difference in genre but, even so, one might expect a greater degree of similarity between the views of these two authors. The differences suggest that Babrius' fables had more popular roots than Valerius' exempla.

I suggest that it is Babrius' moral agenda that is the important aspect of his fables about religion and the gods. The fables reinforce norms surrounding religious worship by satirising practices that are deemed to be incorrect or inappropriate. They demonstrate that it is only the 'proper' practice of religion that is useful to the individual and appropriate in society. The question of social status is irrelevant. Both the lower classes and the upper classes presumably had an interest in ensuring that religion was practised properly, even though

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[32] Skidmore 1996: xv.

[33] See Skidmore 1996: 53-82.

[34] Valerius criticises the neglect of religious practices by the consuls Postumius and Varro (V. Max. 1.1.2 and 1.1.16), the censor Q. Fulvius Flaccus (1.1.20), priests and other high officials (1.1.5) and even a Vestal Virgin (1.1.6).

[35] An ordinary citizen named L. Albinius is praised for neglecting his own travel plans and his family and lending his rustic cart to the Vestal Virgins so that they can make the journey to the town of Caere: see V. Max. 1.1.10. Some farmers who discover two stone chests filled with books on priestly law and philosophy are praised for taking care with the books and ensuring their preservation (1.1.12). Finally, the widows of the soldiers killed at Cannae are praised for putting worship of the gods ahead of their own desire to mourn the dead (1.1.15).

[36] The Persians are praised for their pious behaviour in the temple of Apollo at Delos in V. Max. 1.1.*ext* 6.

[37] See V. Max. 1.5.1-9.

their level of interest in religion and their reasons for supporting religious practices may have differed. The fact that the religious satire of the fables is reflected in proverbs from the same period suggests that Babrius' fables represent general and widely held views on the subject.

II. Friendship

In addition to religion, Babrius' fables can be read as expressing views about the expectations and the realities of friendship. Friends are expected to be kind, hospitable and generous (B87, B106 and B130); consistent (B87); helpful and reliable (B88 and B95); considerate (B46); loyal (B99), and grateful (B119). Friends are expected to demonstrate these virtues by offering hospitality (B106 and B124); helping in times of need (B88); bestowing gifts (B105.6); visiting friends who are ill (B46), and being trustworthy (B99). The realities of friendship are altogether different. The fables teach that friends are inconsiderate (B46), dishonest and self-serving (B95), unreliable at critical times (B88), and that friends can be enemies in disguise (B93, B97 and B130). The cost of friendship can be exceedingly high (B99 and B121). Friendship can also be corrupted by slander (B44) or eroded by the acquisition of new friends (B106).

Each of the fables illustrates a separate precept about the risks and failures of friendship. B88, for example, shows us that friends are notoriously unreliable. In this fable, the owner of a grain field observes that summer has arrived and he announces that he will call on his friends to help him with the harvest. A young lark overhears and reports this to his father. His father responds as follows: "It is not the time just yet to flee. For he who relies on his friends is not in very much of a hurry" ("οὔπω καιρός ἐστι νῦν φεύγειν. / ὃς γὰρ φίλοις πέποιθεν, οὐκ ἄγαν σπεύδει": lines 11–12). Later, the owner of the field returns to inspect his crop. The ears of corn are dropping from their stalks in the summer heat. The man immediately arranges to pay a reaper and a sheaf-carrier to bring in

the harvest. Father lark says to his chicks: "Now it really is the time to flee elsewhere, children, since he relies on himself and not on his friends" ("ὄντως / νῦν ἐστὶν ὥρη, παῖδες, ἀλλαχοῦ φεύγειν, / ὅτ' αὐτὸς αὑτῷ κοὐ φίλοισι πιστεύει": lines 17–19).[38] The message of the fable is clear: a man cannot rely on his friends for help in his moment of need.

B130 illustrates how misleading the appearance of friendship can be. This fable describes a fox that is wondering how to reach some meat inside a trap. A wolf sees the fox and asks whether she can go ahead and take the meat. The fox says: "Come this way, take it and good luck to you, for you are very much a friend to me" ("ἧκε τῇδε καὶ δέχου χαίρων. / φίλος γὰρ εἶ μοι τῶν ἄγαν ἀναγκαίων": lines 5–6). The wolf rushes into the trap, triggers the device and is struck on the head. The wolf then says to the fox: "But if these are the gifts you give to your friends, how will anyone be your friend?" ("ἀλλ' εἰ τοιαῦτα" φησί "τοῖς φίλοις δώσεις / τὰ δῶρα, πῶς τις σοὶ φίλος συναντήσει;": lines 10–11). The behaviour of the fox contradicts one of the fundamental rules of friendship; that someone who claims to be a friend is genuine and does not seek to cause any harm. The fox referred to the wolf as his 'friend' but he abused the term by using it dishonestly. The wolf's naïve trust in the fox is ridiculed when the wolf is injured by the fox's 'gift'. The choice of animals in this particular fable also accentuates the impossibility of a genuine friendship, as the fox and the wolf are usually direct competitors and/or outright enemies in fables.[39]

B99 demonstrates that friendship between powerful men is impossible without a significant cost to one party. This short fable is told as follows:

> Λέοντι προσπτὰς αἰετῶν τις ἐζήτει
> κοινωνὸς εἶναι. χὠ λέων "τί κωλύει;"
> πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν "ἀλλ<ά γ'> ἐνέχυρον δώσεις

[38] For an alternative version of these lines from the *Suda* see Vaio 2001: 130.

[39] See the following fables in the appendix to Perry 1965: fables 258, 568, 593, 625 and 718. Phaedrus' fable about a wolf and a fox seeking judgment from an ape also presents both the wolf and fox as dishonest creatures: see Ph.1.10.

τὠκυπτέρω σου μὴ μεθιέναι πίστιν.
πῶς γὰρ φίλῳ σοι μὴ μένοντι πιστεύσω;"[40]

This fable deals with an unlikely scenario of potential friendship between the king of the beasts and the king of the heavens. The lion agrees to the proposed friendship but the conditions that are imposed will not only rob the eagle of its strength and power but also any means of escape. The lion cunningly presents this precondition of friendship as a pledge of trust. The fable suggests that the cost of friendship with powerful men is not worth the risk. In other fables, too, friendship between those of different status is portrayed as problematic, either because there are different expectations[41] or because violent and natural impulses get in the way.[42]

In addition to these examples, a number of the fables demonstrate how friendly forms of address can be used to mask deception, hostility and violent intentions. In B95.28, for example, the fox addresses his intended prey, the deer, as "dearest" (φιλτάτη); similarly, in B103.13, the sick lion addresses the fox that he wants to eat as "dearest" (φιλτάτη).[43] It is also ironic that when a fox angrily reproves the deer for being so fearful in B95.67 and asks him whether he is 'suspicious of his friends' ("οὕτω τοὺς φίλους ὑποπτεύεις;" line 68), the reader is aware that the deer has every reason to be suspicious of his alleged 'friends'.

An important aspect of friendship in the classical world was 'amicable reciprocity', the repayment of gifts and favours. In the fables, this too is

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[40] [An eagle flew up to a lion and asked him to be his companion. The lion said to him "Why ever not? But you shall give me your two wings as a pledge of good faith not to fly away. For how will I trust you as a friend if you don't stay with me?"] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 139-141.

[41] In B106, for example, a fox expects a lion to always treat it favourably but when the lion makes new friends, the fox slips further down the hierarchy.

[42] The dog is unable to be a true friend to the hare in B87 because it cannot help biting it, while the fox is too cunning, too fond of trickery, and too much inclined to betray others to be a good friend: see B95 and B130.

[43] This term can also be used with sincere affection. For example, Demeter is referred to as 'dear' in B129.6, a pious man refers to a statue of a hero as 'dearest' in B63.4, and the swallow addresses her sister the nightingale as 'dearest' in B12.7.

portrayed in a negative light.[44] Rather than helping those who have been one's benefactors, the fables portray situations in which individuals cheat their partners of their share (B67); renege on agreements (B94 and B98); injure their benefactors and then abandon them (B122), and destroy those who have helped them (B123, B124 and B143). Other fables depict situations in which the expectations of reciprocity fail because a reciprocal act is unwarranted (B27); of questionable value (B48 and B74); cannot be performed (B63 and B78); is performed at an unexpected time (B119), or is otherwise frustrated (B112).

Although friendship is a prominent theme in the fable collection, Babrius' fables demonstrate very little faith in friendship as a social bond. It is portrayed as a tie that is of little benefit and more likely to lead to hurt, loss and regret. The fables portray prospective friendships that are not brought to fruition because of dishonesty and deceit as well as established friendships that are undermined by the failure of friends to live up to expectations. Individuals who trust those who are seemingly their friends are shown to be naïve and unintelligent while those who abuse the notion of friendship purely for personal gain reap the rewards. In the context of the themes of the fable collection as a whole, it is not surprising that friendship is portrayed in such a negative and cynical light. Given that the world of the fable characters is defined by conflict, suffering, dishonesty and a competitive drive to survive, it would be inconsistent for the institution of friendship to prosper. Babrius' treatment of friendship is also consistent with the core moral lessons of the fables, which encourage self-reliance, foresight, moderation, and intelligence. The outcomes for a number of the fable characters would have been better if the characters had relied on these qualities instead of friendship. If the man had been self-reliant in B88, for example, he would have harvested his crop of corn earlier. If the wolf had not been so greedy for food in B130, it would have been wary of the fox and

[44] On amicable reciprocity see Konstan 1997: 79-82, 123-128; Zafiropoulos 2001: 81ff. In Babrius' collection, there is only one positive example (B107) of amicable reciprocity.

refrained from rushing into the trap. If the deer had more foresight and intelligence it would have detected the fox's reasons for calling it a 'friend' in B95. In this way, Babrius' presentation of the theme of friendship suggests that individual action should take precedence over cooperation. The individual who relies on the core moral qualities of self-reliance, foresight, moderation, and intelligence has little need for friendship or, if the prospect of friendship does exist, is better equipped to evaluate whether the friendship is worthwhile or valuable. As we discussed in Chapter Four, the fables suggest that it is up to each individual to develop the skills that are necessary for him/her to survive. This individualistic approach to ethics and survival is entirely consistent with the devaluation of friendship in the fables.

Interestingly, the attitude toward friendship that is conveyed in the Babrian fables is strikingly different from other sources from the same period that exhibit more positive views of friendship. Plutarch, for example, says that friendship is the most pleasant thing in the world and that nothing else gives greater delight.[45] Plutarch cites a saying that a friend is more indispensable than fire and water.[46] Seneca says that friendship should be scrupulously honoured[47] and refers to true friendship as a bond which hope, fear and self-interest cannot sever.[48] Aulus Gellius considers the circumstances under which one should act contrary to law for the sake of a friend.[49] In the *De Amicitia*, Cicero remarks that, aside from wisdom, friendship was the best thing given to man by the immortal gods (6.20). All of these positive statements about friendship are voiced by members of upper class society, including those from wealthy equestrian stock and those educated in Stoic philosophy. It is probable that Babrius belonged to

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[45] Plu. *Moralia* 51B: How to tell a flatterer from a friend.

[46] Plu. *Moralia* 51B: How to tell a flatterer from a friend. On another occasion, Plutarch says that philosophy teaches that one ought to love one's friends (Plu. *Moralia*, 7E: The education of children).

[47] Sen. *Ep.* 94.26.

[48] Sen. *Ep.* 6.2.

[49] Gell. 1.3.9-26.

the same category of educated literati, yet his fables do not present the same, or even similar, views. This is despite the fact that all of the texts cited are concerned with moral instruction, they all evidently consider friendship to be an important theme regardless of differences in approach, and they are all basically contemporaneous. The most likely explanation for this discrepancy is that, in spite of the fact that Babrius was a member of the educated class, his fables nonetheless reflect popular views that were meant for popular consumption, not only for the élite.[50] This explains why the collection's cynical outlook on friendship is mirrored in other popular fable collections. The *Augustana* fables, for example, are said to depict relationships that are characterized by utilitarianism, inequality and the violation of amicable reciprocity.[51] Similarly, Phaedrus' fables demonstrate how reciprocity fails and friendship leads to disaster.[52]

It is possible that the lower classes had a more cynical outlook on life because of the greater suffering and hardship they endured. This outlook may have been reflected in the stories that were circulated among the people and consequently in fables. Another possibility is that friendship was viewed with cynicism and wariness by the lower classes because this view posed less of a personal risk than full trust and acceptance of others. In contrast, the higher classes may have had more confidence in their ability to profit from social relationships and to endure the losses that might arise from failed friendships. While higher level philosophical teachings aspire to an ideal form of friendship, the fables are grounded in the realities of life and err on the side of caution. A further possibility is that Babrius' outlook on friendship is coloured by the connection between the fables and the satiric genre. Satirists of the period were fond of friendship as a theme and Babrius' criticism of friendship as a social institution

[50] See Morgan 2007: 6.
[51] Zafiropoulos 2001: 95.
[52] See Ph.1.5, 1.8, 1.26 and 1.31.

reflects similar tendencies.[53] What is certain is that Babrius' fables present a valuable and insightful picture of views on friendship in this period.

III. Family

The family relationship that features most often in the fables is the relationship between mothers and children. Mothers are either portrayed as overly boastful about, or overly critical of, their children. An example of the former approach is the mother ape that is keen to see her ugly baby compete against other baby animals in a beauty contest (B56). The mother's pride in her ugly baby is a source of amusement for the gods.[54] Another example of the behaviour of a mother can be found in B28, in which a mother toad tries to impress her children by puffing herself up in order to be as large as an ox. In contrast, B109 depicts a mother crab that has impossible expectations of her child in telling it to walk in a straight line rather than sideways. Motherly affection can also be portrayed as overpowering or entirely absent. In B35, for example, a mother ape inadvertently chokes one of her babies by smothering it in her bosom while she casts the other baby aside (ἐκβάλλει: line 5). Ironically, it is the neglected baby that survives.[55] In the fables, motherhood is also associated with frustration and suffering. An example is the fable of the wet nurse who threatens to cast her

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[53] See, for example, Juv. 5 and Mart. 9.14.

[54] Vaio interprets the phrase ὡς καλὴ μήτηρ in line 3 to refer to the ape being an 'excellent' or 'blameless' mother and he rejects Luzzatto's alternative emendation of line 3 (οὐ καλὴ μήτηρ): see Vaio 2001: 82. Vaio's reading may be correct, but he does not explain the ensuing inconsistency with how the ape was generally portrayed in Greek literature, as a grotesque and contemptuous creature that was frequently the subject of satire (see McDermott 1935). If both mother and child were ugly, the fable would be more consistent in representing the notion of physical similarity between parents and children (cf. Arist. *NE* 8.12.2-4) and the potential for this subject to become a target of satire (cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.43-48). A possible compromise is to translate ὡς καλὴ μήτηρ as 'thinking herself a fine mother'.

[55] This fable may hint at the practice of infant exposure although this verb is not commonly used to refer to the practice and it seems rather unusual for the act to be performed by the mother herself. One other instance of this verb being used to refer to exposure occurs in E. *Ion* 964. The same verb can also sometimes refer to miscarriage or abortion: cf. Thphr. *HP* 9.18.8. On the practice of infant exposure in the ancient world see Corbier 2001.

baby to a wolf because she is frustrated with the child's crying (B16.2).[56] Examples of the suffering and grief of motherhood include the fable of the fir tree that is split apart by wedges made from its own timber (B38), the fable of the swallow that grieves because it loses all of its chicks to a hungry snake (B118), and the fable of the lonely and forlorn mother swallow that spurns civilization (B12). When children are ill, mothers are portrayed as concerned and upset but relatively helpless. They accept that the child's fate will become clear in time, with or without the help of the gods (B34 and B78).

The picture of fatherhood is more positive, in that fathers are depicted issuing useful advice and exercising foresight. The father in B47, for example, issues good advice to his three sons about the importance of remaining unified so that they can withstand misfortune. The father lark in B88 is portrayed as wise in that he knows exactly when the family must flee their nest in the grain field. In B98, a father protects his daughter from marrying a lion by imposing certain conditions on the lion and then reneging on the marriage agreement. In other fables, however, fathers are unable to protect their children from misfortune. In B136 (discussed above in Chapter Four), for example, the old man is motivated by fatherly love and concern for his son and he locks him up in a house to keep him safe from danger. Ironically, the son dies from an illness that is a direct result of his captivity. The fable suggests that fate is inescapable and that parental love cannot overcome the inevitability of misfortune. On a less serious note, B54 mocks a eunuch's aspirations to become a father.

Children are depicted in one of two ways; either they turn to their parents for

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[56] This fable presents an interesting example of the common practice among élite citizens of entrusting children to slave nurses and pedagogues. Clark goes so far as to say that there was no general assumption in the ancient world that children should remain with their mothers, and, indeed, it was a fact that most mothers had assistance with the activities of childrearing (Clark 1989: 15). One curious aspect of this fable is that in line 3, the wet nurse is described as an old woman (τήν γραῦν). This detail may have been added for the sake of humour because the notion of an old woman trying to breastfeed is absurd. The lack of nourishment from the old wet nurse certainly helps to explain why the baby is constantly crying.

sympathy and affection or they are critical of their parent's behaviour and instructions. The gluttonous child in B34 and the young raven that is ill in B78 both complain to their mothers and expect sympathy for their conditions. Both complaints are met with a mix of sympathy and pragmatism. In two other fables, children draw attention to the absurdity of their mother's behaviour or requests. In B28, for example, the toadlets tell their mother to stop puffing herself up lest she might burst. In B109, the young crab tells his mother that he will try to walk straight if his mother can show him how to do it first. In B136, the son's desire to prove himself as a brave and capable young man conflicts with his father's desire to protect him. The son is frustrated and angered by his father's over-protectiveness (lines 12–15). Children also alternate between boasting about their family heritage and being ashamed of it. In B62, a mule is heartened by the thought that his mother was a race horse but disheartened by the thought that his father was an ass, while in B81, an ape boasts to a fox about his family heritage.[57]

The other relationships that are portrayed in the fables are those involving husbands and wives, siblings and slaves. Relationships between husbands and wives are seldom portrayed as functional, happy and productive. B10 portrays a disruption to normal marital relations because the head of the household has fallen in love with one of his slave-girls and takes her as his bedfellow. The slave-girl, in turn, feels empowered and argues constantly with the mistress of the house. B116 also portrays a disruption to normal marital relations when a wife has a liaison with a handsome boy and her husband then invites the boy to join them in their house. Marriage ceremonies are cancelled either because of breaches of agreement (B98) or because the bride reveals her true nature and Eros flees (B32).

[57] Another example is B135, in which a cat claims to have superior authority in a household because its mother gave birth to it in the house.

Although siblings are portrayed relatively infrequently in the fables, they are consistently portrayed in a positive light. B28, B38 and B88 portray siblings working together in unison. B47 explicitly encourages unity between siblings as a means of survival. The fable of the nightingale and swallow (B12) portrays two sisters who are kindly disposed to each other and eager for each other's company as a comfort for grief (lines 5–6). Slaves are portrayed in a variety of ways. They can be fearful of their masters, as in B3, for example, when a goatherd is responsible for a goat being injured and he is afraid that his master will discover it (lines 6–9). In contrast, slaves may receive special favour from their masters, as in B10, in which a slave-girl receives expensive gifts from her master. Slaves may also be portrayed as helpful and caring. In B129, for example, some household slaves save their master by rescuing him from the ass that threatens to trample him (lines 18–22).[58]

According to Nøjgaard, Babrius avoids criticising the family because this is incompatible with Babrius' respect for social institutions.[59] Nøjgaard claims that Babrius recasts the original Aesopic fables so that mothers are portrayed as dignified and tender rather than overly proud.[60] At the same time, Nøjgaard recognises that some fables overtly criticise mothers, particularly B35 and B109. In saying that Babrius avoids criticism of the family, Nøjgaard implies that Babrius respects the integrity of the family as an institution and avoids satirising the family in the same way or to the same degree as the other relationships. The picture that has emerged from my study of the collection does not entirely accord with this view. I have found that Babrius quite often satirises marriage, for example, and marriage is fundamental to the family unit. While it is true that Babrius does not always portray family relationships in a negative light, the fables nevertheless have a strong tendency to portray family

[58] B33 may represent a slave-boy helping a farmer to frighten away birds although the term 'boy' (παῖς) is somewhat ambiguous.
[59] Nøjgaard 1967: 361.
[60] Nøjgaard cites B34 and B78 as examples of this (Nøjgaard 1967: 361).

relationships as defective, particularly those between parents and children. These relationships are defective because family members tend to behave in ways that are extreme or are inappropriate to the circumstances. As we have seen above, mothers tend to be boastful, too affectionate, too critical, or neglectful. Children tend to be too needy, too critical, or boastful of their heritage, and fathers tend to be too protective. In this sense, there is some similarity between the way in which Babrius treats the topics of religion and family. Babrius does not satirise the general concept, rather, he satirises specific forms of behaviour that are deemed to be inappropriate.

Compared with other popular ethical material from the period, Babrius' fables stand out in two respects. Firstly, they have more to say about family relationships than other sources, such as proverbs, which say very little about family relationships[61] and, secondly, they present a more negative image of parent/child relationships than *gnomai* or *exempla*, which tend to have a much more positive and idealistic outlook.[62] This makes the fables a particularly interesting source in terms of conveying attitudes that are otherwise unrepresented in extant sources. As we observed while discussing the topic of friendship, it is possible that the conditions of life for the lower classes were more difficult and that this affected the quality of family relationships.[63] This in turn may be reflected in a more cynical attitude toward parent/child relationships in the fable material. Furthermore, when proverbs, *gnomai*, and *exempla* talk about the family they tend to give direct, positive instructions such as 'Honour your parents' or 'Revere your parents like the gods'.[64] In contrast, the fables do not seek to establish absolute virtues but to explore situational

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[61] Morgan 2007: 50.

[62] Morgan 2007: 108-109, 143-145. The fables also present a more negative picture of parent/child relationships than is the case in philosophical works: see for example Arist. *NE* 8.8.3-4 and 8.12.2-6. Eyben describes parental love as a "law of nature" for the ancients citing sources as diverse as Cicero, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius and Epictetus (see Eyben 1991: 116, footnote 12).

[63] For a discussion of how the conditions of life affected the quality of relationships see Rawson 2003: 220.

[64] Morgan 2007: 108.

ethics. Thus, the narrative style of the fable allows for a more nuanced exploration of extreme or inappropriate modes of behaviour and their consequences.

By presenting inappropriate forms of behaviour within the context of family relationships, the fables reinforce the importance of moderation and restraint. Characters that behave with moderation, intelligence and in accordance with certain social expectations are portrayed in a favourable way. Fathers are portrayed in a positive light when they fulfil their function as wise advisers, for example, and slaves are portrayed in a positive light when they are helpful and obedient to their masters.[65] In this sense, the fables reinforce certain social expectations and norms.[66] But there is one moral lesson that undergoes a slight adjustment in the context of family relationships: this is the concept of self-reliance. The fables present unity and solidarity between siblings as a useful and positive trait. Sibling relationships are portrayed in a favourable light when siblings care for, and support, each other.[67] In this way, the fables advise that while one cannot rely on one's friends, one should be able to trust and rely on one's siblings.

A further point of interest is that mothers and fathers never appear together in the fables but tend to act unilaterally and to be allocated different roles. Mothers tend to fulfil the role of carers and nurturers while fathers provide advice and take charge of family affairs. This differentiation of roles agrees with the sources that have survived from ancient Athens more so than the source material from ancient Rome. Orations from ancient Athens are thought to yield evidence that relationships between mothers and their children, particularly

[65] The minor role of slaves in the other fables is consistent with the invisibility of slaves in other popular ethical material. This is particularly the case with proverbs (see Morgan 2007: 51).
[66] A balance between harsh discipline, kindness and affection appears to have been the predominant approach to parenting in ancient Greek and Roman society. See Eyben 1991: 142.
[67] In contrast, B138 depicts the betrayal of kin in a negative light.

between mothers and sons, were both close and affectionate.[68] Golden agrees with this view, adding that closeness between mothers and children was "almost a cliché" and is evident in law-court speeches, drama, scientific works and treatises giving advice on household management.[69] It appears that father and son relationships could be more prone to conflict, particularly where there were financial or inheritance issues, or issues involving sexual rivalry and aggression.[70] In spite of this, there was a clear emphasis on the importance of respect, obedience and loyalty of children toward their parents. Harmony and good relations between parents and children were highly valued.[71] The Roman family model is somewhat more complex. Rawson argues that the circumstances of life in the ancient Roman world impacted negatively on the quality of parent–child relationships[72] yet, in spite of this, there is also said to be evidence "to suggest that adult–child relationships could often be close and sensitive."[73] On the subject of parental roles, Rawson has argued that the roles were similar and parents were often spoken of as a single unit.[74] Even so, Dixon has argued that the maternal relationship was not characterised by tenderness and affection as much as by moral strength and expectations of respect.[75] Babrius makes an additional contribution to this picture by presenting fatherhood in a more positive light than motherhood. This is in line with the general tendency of the collection to portray women in a more negative light.[76]

In the past, Babrius' attitudes toward religion and the family have been interpreted as representative of an élite agenda; ridiculing the religious practices of the lower classes on the one hand and upholding the institution of

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[68] Cox 1998: 100.
[69] Golden 1990: 83.
[70] Golden 1990: 105-106; Cox 1998: 85-87.
[71] Golden 1990: 102-104.
[72] Rawson 2003: 220.
[73] Rawson 1991b: 7.
[74] Rawson 2003: 236.
[75] Dixon 1990: 236.
[76] See B16 and B22 in particular.

the family on the other. In this chapter, I have demonstrated that Babrius' attitude toward religion is, for the most part, traditional and respectful. The criticism of certain religious practices is not prompted by a desire to ridicule the lower classes but to reinforce widely accepted social norms pertaining to the appropriate observation of religious rituals. These norms are reflected in other popular sources, most notably, proverbs. In relation to the family, Babrius does not shy away from illustrating the more negative aspects of family life. The institution of marriage is a target of his satire, and various relationships are portrayed as defective because they tend toward extremes of behaviour and fail to achieve the appropriate degree of moderation and restraint. On the subject of friendship, Babrius' fables constitute a valuable source. The devaluation of friendship as a social bond and the elevation of the principle of self-reliance are in keeping with the broader themes and moral content of the collection. This more individualistic code of ethics constitutes quite a different approach to philosophical and idealistic views on friendship from the same period. For this reason, Babrius' fables are a valuable and useful source for the study of attitudes toward family, friendship and religion in the first to second centuries CE.

CHAPTER SIX: EMOTIONS

Quid enim interest, motu animi sublato, non dico inter pecudem et hominem, sed inter hominem et truncum aut saxum aut quidvis generis eiusdem?[77]

This chapter will demonstrate that Babrius' fables are a useful source for the study of how certain emotions were conceptualised in Babrius' time. In studying ancient emotion, scholars ordinarily rely on works of classical rhetoric, philosophy, poetry, history and drama.[78] There are also some studies of the depiction of emotion in classical Greek and Roman art.[79] But it is rare for scholars to use fables as a form of literary evidence and it is even rarer for scholars to examine literary evidence from the Second Sophistic period for this purpose.[80] And yet Babrius' fables are a particularly fertile resource for the purposes of such a study.

Firstly, as I shall demonstrate, the fables provide examples of how certain emotion-terms were used. Secondly, they portray emotions within a moral framework which allows us to discern how certain emotions were viewed from a moral standpoint. According to Stearns and Stearns, an inquiry into the emotions of any culture and society should begin with a study of the 'attitudes' or 'standards' that a society maintains toward emotions and the expression of those emotions.[81] I submit that Babrius' fables are an excellent starting point in this regard because the fables, in advocating certain morals and values, simultaneously reflect collective attitudes toward different emotions.

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[77] Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 13.48.

[78] See for example Konstan 2006; Harris 2001; Sorabji 2000; Braund and Gill 1997, and Kaster 2005.

[79] See Mackay 2002; Zanker 2004; Toohey 2004.

[80] Langland's discussion of the fables of Phaedrus is a rare example of the use of fables for this purpose (see Langlands 2006: 220-223). In his work on ancient erotic fiction from the Second Sophistic period, Goldhill comments specifically on the lack of scholarship devoted to literature from this time (see Goldhill 1995: x).

[81] Stearns and Stearns 1985: 825.

Babrius' fable collection is unusual because, unlike other fable collections, it particularly lends itself to a study of emotion terminology. Other fable collections, most notably the *Augustana*, do not provide the same insights because they are predominantly action-oriented: the fables describe events, without describing the impact of those events on individual characters. Babrius' fables illustrate how individual characters are affected and moved by certain emotions and how one character's behaviour impacts upon the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of other characters. Nøjgaard was the first to point out the uniqueness of the Babrian fables in this respect but Nøjgaard did not examine the specific emotions that the fables convey nor how they are conceptualised or why.[82] The present chapter will examine these aspects in detail.

First, however, it is necessary to explain some of the limits of this study. Emotion-terms that are used infrequently, such as φθόνος, will not be discussed because preference is given to those emotion-terms that appear most often in the collection. The second limitation is that this study does not examine the epimythia because of the likelihood that the majority of the epimythia are spurious and/or later additions. A third consideration is that in the course of examining the emotion-terms that appear in Babrius' fables, I have not attempted an exhaustive comparison with other ancient sources. I have mainly compared the fables with other literary evidence from the first to second centuries CE and I have selected specific texts on the basis of relevance or interest.

In this chapter, I will also explore similarities and differences between the behaviours expressing certain emotions in the fables and how the same or

[82] Nøjgaard coined the phrase "affective actions" to describe the mixture of emotion and behaviour that Babrius' characters exhibit. As examples of such actions, Nøjgaard cites the little fish begging for its life in B6, the cock cowering in the corner in B5, and the ass plodding on in silence in B7 (see Nøjgaard 1967: 276). See also Nøjgaard 1979: 35.

similar behaviours are understood in modern times, particularly in the disciplines of cognitive and social psychology. This represents an entirely new approach to the study of ancient emotion because other scholars have not made extensive use of cognitive or social psychology in exploring the differences between the understanding of emotion in the ancient and modern worlds. Harris, for example, refers to a wide range of works from philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, and history for his study of the emotion of rage.[83] Konstan refers to a wide range of contemporary sources that give insights into emotion, including news articles, general texts and literature.[84] By focussing on material from the discipline of psychology in particular, I hope to refine our understanding of certain differences and similarities; to identify and explain the emotional phenomena with greater precision, and to open new avenues for interdisciplinary exploration.[85]

What is meant by 'emotion'?

In any study of the emotions of the ancient Greeks and Romans, it is necessary to be sensitive to matters of language. The ancient Greeks used the noun πάθος, for example, which is commonly translated into English as 'emotion'. In ancient Greek, this term refers to 'that which happens to a person or thing', whether a misfortune or simply an event.[86] The noun itself provides a clue as to how the ancient Greeks conceived of emotion. To the ancient Greeks, an emotion was not an internal state, but was brought about by a person's interpretation of the

[83] Harris 2001: 421-456.

[84] Konstan 2006: 365-409.

[85] More and more, classicists are turning to other disciplines for analytical tools with which to examine ancient Greek and Roman texts afresh. Recent examples of such studies include Minchin 2001 (a study that applies modern cognitive theory to the Homeric epics); Sorabji 2006 (a study that explores debates about the nature of the self in both ancient and modern philosophy); Detienne 2007 (a study that uses both history and anthropology to examine ancient Greek culture); and McHardy 2008 (a study that applies modern evolutionary psychology to examine the ancient motives for revenge). In comparing emotion as understood in modern cognitive and social psychology with how Babrius' fables depict emotion, this chapter adopts a similarly interdisciplinary approach.

[86] See entry for πάθος in LSJ.

words, acts and intentions of others.[87] This points to a significant difference between ancient Greek and modern views of emotion. Rather than conceptualising emotions as internal states, the ancient Greeks viewed emotions as reflecting a person's interpretation of, and reaction to social and interpersonal dealings with others. Thus, when the term 'emotion' is used in the context of discussing the ancient Greeks in this chapter, it will be assumed that these nuances are understood.

In Latin also, there are a variety of terms that are commonly translated into English as 'emotion'. These include *motus, commotio, affectus,* and *perturbatio.* As Barton observes, all of these terms suggest a moving force[88] and in this sense, the terms provide clues as to how emotions were perceived by the Romans. For the Romans, emotions were regarded as motivating sources of energy and action.[89] In Stoic philosophy, all emotions were regarded as 'passions', that is, overpowering emotions to which one is, or feels oneself to be, subject or 'passive'.[90] Stoic philosophy sought to provide a means to counteract passions. When discussing the ancient Romans in this study, the term 'emotion' will be used to indicate the general view of emotion, while the term 'passion' will be used to indicate the Stoic view.

In light of these differences, it would be inappropriate to refer to the emotions of the 'Greeks and Romans' as if they were homogeneous. Each society had quite a different conception of emotion. The differences are underscored by the manner in which emotion is viewed and discussed in Aristotelian and Stoic philosophy. According to the Aristotelian approach to the emotions, emotions are not 'bad' in themselves; whether they are 'good' or 'bad' depends on the

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[87] Konstan 2006: xii. It was only in late antiquity that the ancient Greeks came to think of the emotions as having more of an internal aspect.
[88] Barton 2001: 2.
[89] Barton 2001: 2. The same sense of movement is implied in the English term 'emotion' which is derived from the Latin verb *emoveo* (to move out).
[90] Braund and Gill 1997: 5.

surrounding circumstances. For the Stoics, all emotions are problematic because they are all passions that disrupt the delicate balance of human rationality.[91] The extent to which these philosophical positions influenced wider Greek and Roman society and behaviour more generally is a vexed question but an awareness of these different philosophical approaches is nonetheless vital to the study of the literature produced by these societies.

In addition, it is necessary to consider how best to translate various terms that are thought to equate to English emotion-words, such as 'anger', 'love', and 'fear'. As Konstan observes, we cannot assume that the ancient Greek terms that are used to describe various emotions correspond exactly to English emotion-words.[92] Such an assumption would suggest that the expression of emotions is universal and static across cultures and that there is a direct correlation between an emotion-term in one culture and an emotion-term in another. There is sound evidence to suggest that this is not the case and that emotions are conceptualised differently in different societies.[93] To deal with such differences, Wierzbicka advises that it is necessary to pay attention to the language that is used to describe emotions in order to understand both the conceptualization of the emotions and to get behind the words in order to understand the emotions they communicate.[94] The examination of an emotion-term in its native language can also reveal clues about how a particular emotion was viewed from a moral standpoint, how it differed from other emotions, and how it was expressed.[95] For these reasons, the following study gives precedence to the Greek and Latin terms for the emotions. Where a Greek or Latin term for an emotion has a particular nuance, this will be noted and discussed.

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[91] Braund and Gill 1997: 5.
[92] Konstan 2006: x.
[93] See Lutz 1988; MacMullen 2003: 71; Averill 1982: 339; Konstan 2006: 3-41.
[94] Wierzbicka 1999: 27-29.
[95] Muellner 1996: 1.

I. Θυμός

Three different terms in ancient Greek, ὀργή, χολή, and θυμός, are all commonly translated into English as 'anger' but the emotions indicated by the terms ὀργή and θυμός are more intense and sometimes more enduring than the term 'anger' suggests. The metaphors that are used alongside these terms in classical literature, for example, describe gale-force winds, fire and boiling liquids.[96] In Babrius' fables, θυμός is more common than the other two terms. It appears in B5.2, B52.3, B95.66 and B129.10 while the term χολή appears in B95.60 and the noun ὀργή appears in the epimythion of B11. Verbs that are derived from these emotion-terms include χολόω (B10.12 and B15.12) and θυμόω (B82.2, B95.75, B119.3 and in the epimythion at B11.10). The adjective θυμώδης also appears in B95.18 and B102.1. In the discussion below, I will examine some instances of the use of the terms θυμός and χολή.

One intriguing example of the use of θυμός is a fable about a craftsman and a wooden statue of Hermes (B119). The fable tells how a craftsman expected to receive a return for his daily worship of a statue of Hermes but when he received nothing, he expressed θυμός. The fable says that 'he grew angry with the god, and seizing [the statue's] leg, he smashed it on the ground' (τῷ θεῷ δ' ἐθυμώθη, / χαμαὶ δ' ἀπεκρότησε τοῦ σκέλους ἄρας: lines 3–4). This sentence indicates that the emotion had been brought about because of an external act or event, in this case, the lack of response from the statue/god. The verbs 'to seize' (αἰρεω: line 4) and 'to smash on the ground' (ἀποκρότεω: line 4) vividly depict a series of violent acts. Strangely, the craftsman is rewarded for his violent reaction because, after smashing the statue, he discovers gold pouring out of the statue's head. The craftsman's reaction shifts from θυμός to bewilderment. This is demonstrated when the craftsman says (at lines 6–10):

...] " Ἑρμεία,

[96] See Harris 2001: 50-70 for a full discussion of the usage of these terms.

σκαιός τίς ἐσσι καὶ φίλοισιν ἀγνώμων,
ὃς προσκυνοῦντας οὐδὲν ὠφέλεις ἥμας,
ἀγαθοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὑβρίσαντας ἠμείψω.
τὴν εἰς σὲ καινὴν εὐσέβειαν οὐκ ἤδειν."[97]

This fable capitalizes on aspects of Hermes' character as the god of crafts as well as deceit and trickery. Hermes does not respond to the craftsman's daily worship in the way that he expects because Hermes does not reciprocate the man's devotion with any benefit or blessing. Hermes' response to the craftsman's θυμός is unexpected. The revelation of the treasure annuls the feeling of θυμός because Hermes proves to be a generous and responsive god after all. Ironically, the craftsman now owes the god gratitude. The fable is comical because it challenges the craftsman's (and the audience's) expectations of the god and unexpectedly switches the burden of gratitude.

In the fable about the craftsman and the wooden statue, Babrius leads his audience carefully through each stage of the narrative, from the craftsman's pious behaviour and his expectations of the god, to the emotion that is inspired by the lack of response from the god, the behaviour that illustrates the emotion, the consequences and the resolution. On an emotional level, the fable tracks the protagonist as he moves from a positive emotional state (piety and reverence), to a negative emotional state (θυμός as expressed by violence), and finally to a neutral state (bewilderment). The expression of θυμός constitutes the turning point in this process of transformation. Paradoxically, it is the destructive expression of θυμός that enables the discovery of the valuable treasure.

Two further fables indicate ways in which θυμός can be misplaced. B52, for example, is told as follows:

Εἰς ἄστυ τετράκυκλον ἄρσενες ταῦροι
ἅμαξαν ὤμοις εἷλκον· ἡ δ' ἐτετρίγει.
καὶ τὸν βοώτην θυμὸς εἶχε, τῇ δ' οὕτως

[97] ["Hermes, you are such an awkward man and inconsiderate to your friends, you who help in no way at all us who worship you, and you have repaid those who insulted you with many blessings. I did not understand this new way of worshipping you."]

ἐγγὺς προσελθὼν εἶπεν ὥστ' ἀκουσθῆναι·
"ὦ παγκάκιστον κτημάτων, τί δὴ κρώζεις 5
ἄλλων ἐπ' ὤμοις φερομένη σιωπώντων;"[98]

The ox-driver is outraged that the cart is constantly complaining, while the animals, who are doing the real work, suffer in silence. The crux of the fable is the absurdity of the fact that the ox-driver feels θυμός with an inanimate object.[99] In a similar way, B82 uses the verb θυμόω to describe a lion's annoyance with a mouse that happens to run over its mane while it is asleep. The fable says that 'the lion grew angry, his mane bristling up and he leapt up from lying in his den' (ὁ δὲ λέων ἐθυμώθη, / φρίξας δὲ χαίτην ἔθορε φωλάδος κοίτης: lines 2–3). A fox standing nearby is amused at the supposedly strong and mighty lion for being startled by a tiny mouse (lines 4–5). The humour is reinforced when the lion tries to justify its response by claiming that it was not annoyed by the sensation but, rather, by the insulting prospect that the mouse might treat him like a public toilet (lines 6–8).[100]

Babrius uses the character and status of certain protagonists to demonstrate situations in which θυμός is inappropriate. In B82, it is the discrepancy between the size and strength of the lion and the mouse that makes θυμός an inappropriate response. In B95 also, the type of animal in question makes χολή inappropriate. Babrius portrays the deer feeling angry with the fox when he realises that the fox tried to deceive him. The deer is said to feel 'anger in his breast' (χολὴ δ' ἐπέζει καρδίην: line 60). This causes a 'bristling up' (φρίξ: line 59) of the hairs on the deer's back and legs. In fables, deer are more often

[98] [Some male bulls drew a four-wheeled wagon pulling it with their shoulders into the city. It creaked. Anger took hold of the ox driver, and coming up close he said, so that he could be heard: "O wickedest of all things, why do you cry out, you who are being carried on the shoulders of people who are silent?"] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 78-79.

[99] We can compare the overreaction of the ox driver in this fable with B114, for example, in which a man is not angered by the boasting of a lamp but simply relights it and tells it to keep silent.

[100] See discussion in Vaio 2001: 120-121.

inclined to feel fear, not anger.[101] This suggests that the deer's χολή is intended to be humorous. The inappropriateness of the deer's reaction is reinforced when the deer insults the fox by calling it a 'hated creature' (ὦ στύγημα: line 62) and utters a threat, saying "now you will regret it if you approach me and dare to mutter something" (νῦν μὲν οὐχὶ χαιρήσεις, / ἤν μοι προσέλθῃς καὶ γρύσαι τι τολμήσῃς: lines 62–63).

A final example involves the goddess Aphrodite. In B10, Babrius describes a man who is infatuated with one of his slave-girls. Although the slave-girl is described as both 'ugly' (αἰσχρῆς: line 1) and 'filthy' (κακορρύπου: line 1), the man lavishes expensive gifts upon her. The slave-girl makes daily supplications to Aphrodite as if the goddess is responsible for these gifts until Aphrodite appears to her in a dream and says: "Do not feel gratitude to me, as if I make you beautiful. I am angry with him to whom you appear beautiful" ("μή μοι χάριν σχῇς ὡς καλήν σε ποιούσῃ· / τούτῳ κεχόλωμαί" φησιν "ᾧ καλὴ φαίνῃ": lines 11–12). Aphrodite feels χολή with the man because he is unable to discriminate between a woman who is ugly and a woman who is beautiful. The man maintains his own personal and subjective opinion about the slave-girl which has nothing to do with reality or, indeed, with the influence of the goddess.[102] The χολή expressed by the goddess is humorous because it reflects the fact that the goddess feels she has no role.

The manner in which emotion-terms such as θυμός are used in the fables enables us to determine how the emotion themselves were conceptualised. For Babrius, θυμός is not an internal state but an emotion that is brought about because of some external act or event, such as the failure of another to meet

[101] See for example, the fable of the Calf and Deer, in which a deer explains to a calf that in spite of being larger, faster and equipped with horns, it still cannot help running away when it hears the barking of dogs (fable no. 351 in the appendix in Perry 1965: 485).

[102] There is an epigram by Marcus Argentarius in which he says that true love can only be for an ugly girl since anyone falls in love with a pretty one. See Marc. Arg. no. IV 1313-1318 in Gow and Page 1968: 148. I am grateful to Professor David Konstan for this reference.

one's expectations. It can also arise because of irritating behaviour, such as complaining without cause, or because of an attempt to deceive. In each case, θυμός is directed at a specific individual or target. The fables also illustrate some of the physiological and behavioural manifestations that accompany the emotion. Babrius describes the craftsman expressing his θυμός through violence in B119, the ox-driver who abuses and insults the cart in B52, the lion's mane 'bristling' in B82, and the deer feeling χολή in its breast in B95.

One distinctive aspect that emerges from all of the examples is that the manifestation of θυμός is not portrayed in a serious fashion in the fables. The portrayal of θυμός and other similar emotions often involves an element of irony and absurdity. After all, how can the ox-driver be so angry with a cart, and how can Aphrodite, the goddess of love, be angry with a man for being in love?[103] In other fables, θυμός is explicitly ridiculed or criticized by other characters who clearly view it as an overreaction. The fox in B82, for example, ridicules the lion for being so angry with the mouse; the fox claims that the deer is misguided for being angry in B95, and Hermes' unexpected and generous gift demonstrates the inappropriateness of the man's θυμός in B119. In each of the fables, θυμός is shown to be unjustified and the audience is encouraged to smile wryly at the emotional reaction of the protagonist. This approach is consistent with the satirical and comical aspects of the fables.

By encouraging his audience to view θυμός from a satiric and ironic perspective,[104] Babrius is encouraging his audience to examine the nature of the circumstances surrounding the emotion, including what caused the emotion, whether the cause was legitimate or illegitimate, who the emotion affected and

[103] If it seems irreverent for Babrius to be critical of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, we need only look at a number of other fables for confirmation of this attitude: see B32 and B22 in particular.
[104] In this sense, Babrius' fables can perhaps be compared with some of Juvenal's *Satires*, in which as Braund observes, Juvenal switches between satire, irony and a type of superior cynicism (Braund 1988: 197).

the consequences. The overall message is that the causes, targets and manifestations of θυμός must be appropriate in the particular circumstances. If any one of these aspects is misjudged, the individual leaves himself/herself open to ridicule. This approach is reminiscent of Aristotle's account of emotions such as anger, in which he states that one should know exactly when and how to express a particular emotion, not necessarily to avoid all forms of an emotion at all times.[105]

Interestingly, all of Babrius' fables about θυμός depict social interactions between characters of different levels or status positions, such as man/god, predator/prey, man/inanimate object. Although θυμός is usually expressed by a character with superior status and inflicted upon a character with inferior status, Babrius also demonstrates how θυμός can reveal the pride and vulnerability of characters that have superior status, such as the lion in B82 or Aphrodite in B10. In fables in which θυμός is expressed by an inferior party, it is presented as absurd, such as the deer being angry with the fox in B95. In this way, Babrius' fables illustrate how θυμός can have a negative impact on individual social status as well as on social relations. This illustrates Aristotle's view that θυμός is justifiable only if there has been a belittlement or slight (ἡ ὀλιγωρία),[106] because a slight has the potential to impact negatively upon a person's self-esteem and to reduce a person's place within the social hierarchy.[107] Babrius' fables illustrate a range of scenarios in which the belittlement itself constitutes an insufficient reason for anger, thereby making the protagonist appear foolish.

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[105] Arist. *NE.* 4.5.1-5.

[106] Arist. *Rh.* 2.2.2.

[107] Konstan 2006: 73. A good example of the 'social justification' for anger is Demosthenes' speech *Against Meidias*. Meidias was charged with offences in relation to the festival of the Dionysia, including a physical assault on Demosthenes and various other acts of violence and outrage (D. 21.1). Later in the same speech, Demosthenes says that it is not necessarily the physical blow itself that causes ὀργή, but rather the 'indignity' (ἀτιμία) of it, presumably because it is witnessed by others (see 21.72).

The fables do not condemn angry emotions in the manner of the Stoic philosophers.[108] Seneca, for example, expresses a negative view of *ira* ('anger')[109] and recommends that it is best to avoid it at all costs. He says:

> *Optimum est primum irritamentum irae protinus spernere ipsisque repugnare seminibus et dare operam, ne incidamus in iram. Nam si coepit ferre transversos, difficilis ad salutem recursus est, quoniam nihil rationis est, ubi semel adfectus inductus est iusque illi aliquod voluntate nostra datum est; faciet de cetero quantum volet, non quantum permiseris.*[110]

Elsewhere, Seneca describes *ira* as the most hideous and uncontrollable of all the emotions[111] and maintains that it more often leads to harm than good.[112] Babrius does not condemn the emotion. The fables question the appropriateness of acting out of this emotion and emphasise the importance of viewing θυμός within the context of the surrounding circumstances. This approach is closer to Aristotelian philosophy than Stoic views. While the influence of Stoic philosophy is clearly evident in the writings of members of the learned élite of the period, such as Seneca and Plutarch, it is less evident in the fables of Babrius. This may indicate that Babrius, although a member of the educated class, was not a strict proponent of Stoic views. If this is the case, then the Babrian fables may reflect the accuracy of Harris' conclusions as to the influence of Stoic thought on educated Romans around the time of the first century CE:

> [e]ducated Romans of Augustus' time were well aware that philosophers had often found fault with angry emotions. Some of them held more or less strict Stoic views on the subject. Most, however, probably assumed an attitude which was a simplified form of Aristotle's — in other words, they approved of *ira/iracundia* when it was directed in appropriate quantity against an

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[108] See Braund and Gill 1997: 5. On Stoic attempts to deal with various emotions see Sorabji 2000: 159–168. Of course, the Stoics were not the only philosophers to have views about anger. The Epicureans argued that anger was inescapable and that it could, at times, be beneficial (see Fowler 1997: 24).

[109] According to Harris, the Latin term *ira* covers a wider range of angry emotions than the various terms for anger that were used by the ancient Greeks (see Harris 2001: 68-70).

[110] [The best course is to reject at once the first incitement to anger, to resist even its small beginnings, and to take pains to avoid falling into anger. For if it begins to lead us astray, the return to the safe path is difficult, since, if once we admit the emotion and by our own free will grant it any authority, reason becomes of no avail; after that it will do, not whatever you let it, but whatever it chooses]. Sen. *Dial.* 1.8.1-2 (transl. Basore).

[111] Sen. *Dial.* 1.1.1.

[112] See Sen. *Dial.* 1.17.7. Also see Plu. *Moralia* 454C, 455C and 459B: 'On the control of anger'. Also Cic. *QF* I.1.13-14.

appropriate target (and *ira* was such a wide term — it was difficult to be altogether against it).[113]

i. Ancient θυμός and modern anger

A comparison of the concept of θυμός in Babrius' fables and the concept of anger in modern cognitive and social psychology yields interesting insights. In Babrius' fables, actual physical violence that is prompted by θυμός is rare, while insults, threats and commands are more common. We see this in the insult uttered by the ox-driver in B52, the threat uttered by the deer in B95, and Aphrodite's sharp rebuke in B10. In a similar way, modern psychologists have found that verbal responses or the refusal of a benefit are more common expressions of the emotion of anger than physical violence.[114] There are also some similarities in how anger manifests. Babrius' fables portray a man violently smashing a wooden statue, a lion leaping up and bristling with θυμός, and a deer threatening a fox. In a similar way, psychologists observe that while anger can be expressed in an indefinite number of ways,[115] a common impulse underlying all angry responses is the urge to attack.[116]

One important difference between the ancient and modern understanding of this emotion concerns the targets of anger. Babrius' fables are not at all concerned with θυμός involving loved ones or kin. Babrius' examples of θυμός are firmly rooted in a social web of relationships between unequals, non-relatives and characters that are very unlikely to develop close relationships because of differences in social standing. This reflects a broader trend among classical writers for whom anger between loved ones is said to have been only a

[113] Harris 2001: 218-19.
[114] Averill 1982: 208.
[115] Averill 1982: 208.
[116] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 384. On the role of physiological arousal in the emotional expression of anger see Zillman, Johnson and Day 1974.

very rare and "spasmodic concern".[117] In contrast, modern psychologists have found that the individuals who are closest to us, including friends, loved ones and acquaintances, are the most frequent targets of anger.[118] It is suggested that the closeness of the relationship has an effect on how the anger is expressed: either enhancing the anger because we have high expectations of a person who is close to us, or reducing the anger because we want to remain as positive as we can about those with whom we are close.[119] It is suggested that anger is frequently viewed as justifiable and constructive because the purpose of the emotion is to effect a change in the situation.[120]

A further point of difference between the ancient and modern understanding of this emotion relates to the effects of anger. In the fables, θυμός is rarely positive or constructive. The only fable in which θυμός leads to a constructive outcome is B119, although, in this case, the positive outcome also involves damage to the relationship, namely, the destruction of the wooden image of the god. In contrast, some modern psychologists maintain that anger can be positive and constructive and that it has an important function both in our psychological as well as social existence.[121] Anger is said to be "an energizer and organizer of behavior" as well as a means to regulate interpersonal behavior.[122] Contemporary people can view anger as an unpleasant experience but, even so, psychologists suggest that it is not uncommon for it to be viewed as a positive and constructive emotion because of its ability to clarify and resolve an issue

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[117] Harris 2001: 307. The Romans in particular are said to have had little to say about anger between relatives (see Harris 2001: 311). When they did express a view, there is said to be a tendency to deplore anger between close friends and family (see Harris 2001: 406).

[118] Averill 1982: 183.

[119] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 398.

[120] Averill 1982: 183.

[121] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 269. Moderate anger is thought to have a legitimate protective function: see Bleil et al. 2004. Extremes of anger, on the other hand (that is, both suppression of anger and giving full vent to anger) are thought to pose significant health risks: see Chesney and Rosenman 1985.

[122] Lemerise and Dodge 1993: 537.

and to restore balance in relationships.[123] This concept is foreign to the conceptualisation of θυμός in Babrius' fables. Thus, θυμός is a good example of a significant shift in perceiving an emotion across time, place and culture.

[123] Averill 1982: 228.

II. Νέμεσις[124]

The term νέμεσις features in two of the fables in the Babrian collection, once as the personification of a goddess in B43.6 and once in the epimythion of B11. Compared to the other emotion-terms that are used in the collection, νέμεσις features seldom in the fables.[125] The first occurrence is in B43. In this fable, a deer beholds his reflection while drinking from a pool of water. He feels distressed at the sight of his hooves but admires the beauty of his splendid horns (lines 1–5). Unknown to him, the goddess Νέμεσις is close by. The fable says that 'Nemesis was present, she who causes harm to such haughtiness' (παρῆν δὲ Νέμεσις, ἡ τὰ γαῦρα πημαίνει: line 6). Hunters with tracking dogs appear and they start to chase the deer. The deer flees and manages to run a fair distance until his horns become entangled in some undergrowth. The deer bemoans his fate and comments on the irony that the very horns he was admiring will cause him to lose his life (lines 13–15). In this fable, Νέμεσις is used as a proper noun and it clearly refers to the goddess. She represents a feeling of moral indignation at the deer's pride and vanity. Particular emphasis is placed on the excessive pride of the deer when the fable says 'as for his horns, he admired them too much as beautiful' (ἐπὶ τοῖς δὲ κέρασιν ὡς καλοῖς ἄγαν ηὔχει: line 5). Νέμεσις is directly responsible for punishing the deer for his vanity and pride.

A further example is B11. In this fable, a man catches a fox that has been stalking around his vines and orchards and, in order to torment it, he sets fire to its tail and then sets it free (lines 1–4). A watchful goddess (τὴν δ' ἐπίσκοπος

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[124] The noun νέμεσις is derived from the verb 'to assign' (νέμω). According to Robertson, this verb commonly appears in legal, administrative and religious contexts where it signifies formal and ritual acts of bestowing benefits and goods (Robertson 1964: 1). An example of this usage can be seen in B57, which describes how Hermes filled a wagon with lies and tricks and went about 'assigning' (νέμων) a small portion of the goods to each community. The noun νέμεσις is commonly translated as 'righteous indignation' (Harris 2001: 53).

[125] Compared with other personifications, Νέμεσις is rare. Ἔρως is mentioned in B22.4-5, B32.10 and B98.1 while νίκη is mentioned in B1.6, B31.20, B56.6, B68.10 and B72.15.

δαίμων: line 4) guides the fox straight into the man's grain fields. The man loses his entire harvest and laments the disaster (lines 8–9). The epimythion of the fable says:

> χρὴ πρᾶον εἶναι μηδ' ἄμετρα θυμοῦσθαι.
> ἔστιν τις ὀργῆς νέμεσις, ἣν φυλαττοίμην,
> αὐτοῖς βλάβην φέρουσα τοῖς δυσοργήτοις.[126]

The epimythion states that there is 'retribution' (νέμεσις) for anger (ὀργή). In this context, the moralist refers to νέμεσις not as a goddess, but the emotion of righteous indignation that is felt at unjust, inappropriate or reckless acts committed by men. The moralist clearly approves of νέμεσις as a response to 'unmeasured anger'.

The appearance of Νέμεσις in the Babrian fables is consistent with the fact that the goddess had quite a prominent role in Roman religion and literature at the time.[127] She was officially recognized in Roman state religion[128] and had a statue on the Capitoline.[129] There are also indications that Νέμεσις was worshipped widely by public officials, military figures and ordinary Romans alike[130] and that she was "enlisted in the protection and promotion of the interests of the emperor, the Empire, and on a local level, some municipal communities."[131] Various moralising authors demonstrate an interest in Νέμεσις, portraying her as a frightful and envious goddess[132] and a guardian of moral indignation.[133] In the *Moralia*, for example, Plutarch looks back to the poems of Hesiod and describes the desertion of mankind by Νέμεσις as a sign of mankind's moral

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[126] [It is necessary to be mild and not to be angry without measure. There is some retribution for anger; may we guard against it, for it brings harm to those who are quick to anger.]

[127] This is despite the fact that the goddess did not have a Latin name: see Plin. *Nat.* 11.251-252. In Syria, Hornum notes that Nemesis was connected and perhaps confused with other solar deities (Hornum 1993: 29).

[128] Hornum 1993: 15.

[129] See Plin. *Nat.* 11.251-252. In this passage, Pliny refers to an interesting custom whereby the Romans would touch the statue of Nemesis and then touch their mouths as a way of deflecting possible punishment from the goddess for irreverent or morally inappropriate speech.

[130] Hornum 1993: 15-42.

[131] Hornum 1993: 89.

[132] Stat. *Silv.* 2.6.73-78.

[133] See Plu. *Moralia* 413A-B: 'Obsolescence of oracles'.

degradation.[134] In book three of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Ovid narrates a poem in which the goddess Νέμεσις is called on to exact retribution for Narcissus' scornful mockery of love.[135] Babrius' depiction of Νέμεσις is therefore consistent with other writers of the Second Sophistic, who refer to the goddess because of her connection with moral reprobation.[136]

In his fables, Babrius gives some insight into how Νέμεσις exacts retribution. First, Νέμεσις must be present in order to witness the inappropriate act. The goddess then manufactures a situation that will punish the individual in a highly specific way. Νέμεσις is a silent punisher. She does not reprimand her victims, rather, the punishment speaks for itself. The retribution is always presented as well deserved because of the inappropriateness of the behaviour that prompted it, such as the deer delighting 'too much' in the beauty of his horns in B43 and the man devising the cruel 'torment' for the fox in B11. The fact that Νέμεσις is always justified highlights the similarity between the concept in Babrius' fables and the concept in archaic, epic and religious contexts, in which the goddess signified "divine displeasure at human immoderation".[137] The concept is not represented in the sense of 'blame' (as in the *Odyssey*),[138] or the negative sense of 'resentment' (as in Hesiod's *Theogony*)[139] or divine envy (as in the *Anthologia Graeca*).[140] Babrius follows the more common

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[134] Plu. *Moralia* 413A-B: 'Obsolescence of oracles'. In this passage, Plutarch refers to Hesiod's account of Nemesis in the *Works and Days*, in which the beautiful goddess is described as fleeing (along with 'Shame' or Αἰδώς) from the wicked race of iron and retreating from earth to the safety of Mt Olympus: Hes. *Op.* 197-201. In the *Theogony*, the goddess is presented in a much more negative light. She is the daughter of Night (Νύξ) and the sister of Deceit (Ἀπάτη), Friendship (Φιλότης), Old Age (Γῆρᾰς) and Strife (Ἔρις): Hes. *Th.* 223-225.

[135] Ov. *Met.* 3.402-406. In this poem, Nemesis is referred to as Rhamnusia to indicate her connection with the cult at Rhamnous.

[136] On references to Νέμεσις in Second Sophistic literature in general see Konstan 2006: 116. In Homer's *Iliad*, νέμεσις refers to an emotion ('indignation') rather than a personified abstraction. See for example, Hom. *Il.* 2.223 and 5.757. For a discussion of various instances of the term in epic see Robertson 1964: 24-44.

[137] Konstan 2006: 128.

[138] For a discussion of the use of the term in Homer's *Odyssey* see Robertson 1964: 3.

[139] Hes. *Theogony*, 223-235; discussed in Konstan 2006: 119.

[140] *Anthologia Graeca*, 10.123; discussed in Hornum 1993: 9.

conception of Νέμεσις in Roman religion and literature as an expression of just punishment.

Νέμεσις is also presented in B11 as a righteous and just response to 'unmeasured anger' (ἄμετρα θυμοῦσθαι: line 10). This form of punishment is only ever executed by the goddess as punishment for the inappropriate behaviour of those lower down in the cosmic hierarchy, whether man or animal. Babrius does not depict νέμεσις as indignation felt by men towards other men, which is Aristotle's area of interest.[141] This form of retribution, for Babrius at least, is exclusively the domain of the divine. It is also interesting that the divine figure steps in when a character is engaging in inappropriate conduct that it unseen by others. The deer is alone when he is admiring his reflection in B43 and the man who decides to torment the fox in B11 also acts independently. This reinforces the concept of Νέμεσις as an all-seeing and omniscient divine force that regulates private as well as public conduct.

i. Ancient νέμεσις and modern indignation

In terms of a comparison with the modern concept of indignation, there is a clear difference between Babrius' conception of νέμεσις as an external and divine presence and the modern concept of 'indignation' as an internal and human emotional state.[142] At the same time, there is a degree of similarity, in that modern studies suggest that indignation is more authoritative and more moral than other emotions such as anger and hatred because it involves a more advanced process of moral appraisal than other emotions.[143] Unlike hatred it

[141] See Arist. *Rh.* 2.9.1-2.10.1. In this passage, Aristotle does not treat Νέμεσις as a deity but rather a feeling that is experienced by men when they evaluate the inappropriate acts of other men. For a discussion of Aristotle's approach in this passage see Konstan 2006: 111, 115. Similarly, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Νέμεσις is presented as a virtue that represents the mean between 'envy' (φθόνος) and 'malice' (ἐπιχαιρεκακίας): see discussion in Burger 1991.

[142] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 400.

[143] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 284.

focuses on a specific act and does not involve a generalized negative emotion.[144] It is also more rational and more deliberative than either hatred or anger because it involves more complex moral appraisals of the event or agent in question.[145] In a similar way, classical writers such as Babrius present this emotion as being expressed in a morally justified, authoritative, rational and specific manner.

A further point of interest is that modern psychology recognizes that the emotion of indignation can have positive aspects, in the sense that it can be morally justified, as well as negative aspects, when it tends to promote feelings of self-righteousness. Indignation is said to involve an implicit contrast between one's own innocence and the immorality of the other person.[146] By focusing on the moral weaknesses of others, the indignant individual may cease to recognize his or her own weaknesses and moral deficiencies, thereby encouraging him or her to feel self-righteous and superior.[147] In the fables, the notion of excessive indignation or 'self-righteousness' does not exist. The punishment inflicted by the goddess is always justified and appropriate to the circumstances.

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[144] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 383.
[145] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 278.
[146] Solomon 1993: 271.
[147] Solomon 1993: 271.

III. Ἔχθρα

The noun ἔχθρα is used in B85.1 and B89.3. The adjective ἐχθρός appears in B11.1 when a fox is described as a farmer's enemy; in the epimythia of B35.8 and B44.8; in B71.4 when the sea is described as an enemy of man, and in B44.5, B87.5 and B95.85. The verbs ἐχθραίνω and μισέω appear in B59.7, in the epimythion of B13.13 and in B111.16. Both verbs have the meaning 'to hate' but the verb μισέω, in particular, expresses an emotion that is felt about a category of person rather than an individual.[148]

In B89 (discussed above in Chapter Three), Babrius uses the emotion-term ἔχθρα to describe the feeling of enmity between a wolf and a lamb.[149] We recall that the wolf tries to find a reason to justify its response to the lamb (lines 1–3):

> Λύκος ποτ' ἄρνα πεπλανημένον ποίμνης
> ἰδὼν βίῃ μὲν οὐκ ἐπῆλθεν ἁρπάξων,
> ἔγκλημα δ' ἔχθρης εὐπρόσωπον ἐζήτει.[150]

The wolf accuses the lamb of various crimes (lines 4, 6, 8). The lamb successfully rebuts all of these charges by pleading youth and innocence. The wolf is not persuaded and it devours the lamb regardless. Before doing so, the wolf states that it will not be deprived of its dinner even if it has no reason to kill the lamb (lines 11–12). In this fable, Babrius uses the term ἔχθρα to describe the wolf's immediate reaction to the lamb. In other words, the feeling of ἔχθρα is presented as synonymous with the desire of a predator to kill prey. Even when the wolf tries to rationalize and justify its ἔχθρα, its natural impulse prevails. The fable demonstrates that the ἔχθρα that exists between certain categories of individual is instinctive and unchangeable.[151]

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[148] See Konstan 2006: 186.

[149] In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles declares that the enmity between himself and Hektor is like that between wolves and lambs (Hom. *Il.* 22.260-267). B89.1-3 may be an allusion to this passage.

[150] [Once a wolf, seeing a lamb wandering from the sheep, did not set upon him and seize him by force, but looked for a plausible reason for his hatred.]

[151] In a similar way, B87 describes a dog that cannot decide whether it is an ἐχθρός or φίλος to a hare. The dog alternates between biting the hare and fawning upon it. Ultimately, the hare demands that the dog decide whether it is a friend or enemy and behave accordingly.

In the fables, the term ἔχθρα is also used to describe feelings of rivalry between different warring factions. In B85, for example, the fable commences with the statement: 'once there was hatred between the dogs and wolves' (Κυσίν ποτ' ἔχθρη καὶ λύκοις συνειστήκει: line 1). No explanation for the ἔχθρα is given, although we can guess that it stems from the fact that the dogs enjoy the privileges and benefits of domestication while the wolves must hunt for their food.[152] The feeling of ἔχθρα forms the backdrop for an impending war between the dogs and wolves. The critical factor, however, is the lack of unity among the dogs because of their different breeds and appearances in contrast to the unity between the wolves. The fable suggests that the more unifying features there are to define a group, the more powerful the feeling of ἔχθρα for the 'other' will be and the greater the likelihood of success in battle.

Feelings of ἔχθρα are not limited to animal characters in the fables, they can also be experienced by gods. In B59, Babrius describes how Zeus, Poseidon and Athena once engaged in a contest of craftsmanship. Zeus created man, Athena created a house and Poseidon created a bull. Momus was appointed to judge the contest. The fable says that Momus, 'because he had been born hating everything' (ὡς πέφυκε πάντας ἐχθραίνων: line 7) found fault with all of the creations.[153] Momus is a son of Nyx (Night) and the personified god of 'blame', which explains why, in this fable, he finds fault with all the objects. Yet Babrius also suggests that ἔχθρα is an innate aspect of the god's character and that this feeling underlies the god's outlook. The line between ἔχθρα and criticism of others is somewhat blurred in this fable.

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[152] In a number of the fables, the wolf is depicted as a hungry and desperate animal (see B16, B89, B93, B105, B113, B122, B130 and B132). Dogs, on the other hand, are depicted as the well-fed companions of mankind (see B42, B100, B110, B128 and B129).

[153] In the *Augustana* version of this fable (P100), Momus is cast out of Mt Olympus because of his insufferable criticisms. Babrius' version only describes events that take place prior to his exile.

One final example demonstrates that ἔχθρα is not always an instinctive emotion but can be cultivated through slanderous speech. B44 describes three bulls that graze together in a field. A lion wants to attack them but knows that he cannot tackle all three at once. Instead, the fable says that he 'made them enemies by confounding them with false, slanderous words' (λόγοις δ' ὑπούλοις διαβολαῖς τε συγκρούων / ἐχθροὺς ἐποίει: lines 4–5). In this way, the lion is able to separate the members of the group and prey upon each of them in turn. The fable demonstrates that ἔχθρα can be provoked and encouraged. This suggests that it is not necessarily a rational emotion.

Thus, Babrius' fables provide a variety of insights into ἔχθρα. It is an emotion that is experienced by gods, men and animals alike and it can be directed at a variety of targets. It can be instinctive or encouraged.[154] It can provide a motive for killing another individual, as in B89, or waging war against a group, as in B85. It is presented as the opposite of friendship (B44 and B87). In the fables, ἔχθρα is also portrayed as a feature of the interaction between predator and prey.[155] Those who hate are usually predators such as dogs, wolves, lions and men, while those who are hated are vulnerable animals such as lambs, hares and deer.[156] In portraying ἔχθρα in this way, the fables reveal ideas about power and hierarchy. Those who have power and higher status express their ἔχθρα for those lower down by attacking[157] and capturing them.[158] Those who have less power and status can only respond by trying to reason their way out

[154] The notion that speech can inspire ἔχθρα is evident in forensic oratory. Lysias' twelfth oration, *Against Eratosthenes*, unashamedly strives to inspire ἔχθρα in the jurors by repeatedly referring to the Thirty as 'enemies' (ἐχθρόι). There is no debate as to whether ἔχθρα is the morally appropriate response on the part of the jury. On the contrary, Lysias makes an emotional appeal that overrides rational deliberation (cf. 12.2, 20, 44, 51, 54, 60, 69, 70, 71, 79, 88, 94, and 95 in particular). For a discussion of the emotive aspects of Lysias' argument see Fogelmark 1979: 139. Aristotle was also well aware of the capacity for ἔχθρα to cloud the rational judgment of jurors (cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1.1.5-7).

[155] We see this in B11, B87, B89 and B95.

[156] The only exception is B59, in which Momus has a habit of 'hating everything'.

[157] E.g. the wolf that attacks and devours the lamb in B89 and the dog that bites the hare in B87.

[158] E.g. the man who catches the fox in B11 and the lion that lures a deer into its den in B95.

of the situation[159] or by asking to be treated in a straightforward manner.[160] In cases where ἔχθρα is felt by two warring factions, victory depends on unity and sound leadership.

The most distinctive feature of Babrius' conception of ἔχθρα is that a moral evaluation of the target is not a precondition of the emotion.[161] The question of whether or not the target is morally innocent is simply irrelevant in the fables. This emotion is indifferent to causing harm to the subject, as we saw in the wolf's indifference to the lamb's sound reasoning in B89. In this sense, Babrius' conception of ἔχθρα differs from the more idealistic Aristotelian view of this emotion as involving a moral evaluation of the individual or individuals as having a morally vicious character/s.[162] Aristotle expresses this concept when he says 'every one hates a thief or informer' (τὸν γὰρ κλέπτην μισεῖ καὶ τὸν συκοφάντην ἅπας).[163] In the fables, there is never a moral cause for ἔχθρα; it is instinctive and once it takes hold, it is intransigent. Even so, those who feel and express ἔχθρα are not themselves immune from moral evaluation or punishment. Momus' criticisms are not heeded by the other gods in B59, for example. Similarly, the protagonist in B11 loses his entire harvest, and the protagonists in B44 lose their former friendship and, ultimately, their lives. For Babrius, then, ἔχθρα is an emotion that is often expressed by those with power against the powerless but it is not without personal risk.

Ἔχθρα is a more common emotion-term in the fables than θυμός. The reason for this appears to be that ἔχθρα is an emotion that is instinctively felt and experienced especially in interactions between characters of different status, while θυμός is provoked by specific external acts or events. In this sense, the

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[159] E.g. the lamb that tries to reason with the wolf in B89.
[160] E.g. the hare that asks this of the dog in B87.
[161] On moral evaluation see Konstan 2006: 190. Also Konstan 2007: 171.
[162] See Konstan 2006: 190.
[163] Arist. *Rh.* 2.4.29-30.

greater prevalence of ἔχθρα matches the broader themes of conflict and survival in the fable collection. But it is also possible that the occurrence of ἔχθρα in the fables reflects aspects of real social relationships in the first to second centuries CE. According to Epstein, feelings of enmity and hostility were common as a result of the competition and ambition that characterized public life.[164] In the fables, this phenomenon may be represented by characters who feel ἔχθρα towards their competitors, enemies and those who are lower down in the social hierarchy.

In addition, the variation in the fables between the concept of ἔχθρα as an instinctive emotion but one that can also pose risks for the individual may reflect the two-sided approach towards enmity that is seen in other literature from the period. In his essay entitled 'How to Profit by One's Enemies', for example, Plutarch informs Cornelius Pulcher that he will inevitably encounter feelings of ἔχθρα during his career in the Roman civil service.[165] Plutarch states that ἔχθρα is a feature of all governments and that it is produced by envy (φθόνος) and jealous rivalry (ζῆλος).[166] At the same time, Plutarch implies that expressing, or responding to, ἔχθρα poses risks for the individual in the sense that the individual can become less of a man if he expresses this emotion through the use of harsh words.[167] In Plutarch's view, a hostile reaction to ἔχθρα is personally and morally degrading as well as socially damaging. In a similar way, Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* expresses the view that feelings of enmity are to be avoided because they disturb man's inner tranquillity.[168] In quite a different context, however, Cicero argues that there were good reasons

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[164] Epstein 1985: 1. The Latin term *inimicitia* denotes 'enmity'. For a discussion of this term see Konstan 2006: 193.

[165] Plu. *Moralia* 86Cff: 'How to profit by one's enemies'. On the identity and status of Cornelius Pulcher see Bowersock 1965: 269-270.

[166] Plu. *Moralia* 86C: 'How to profit by one's enemies'.

[167] Plu. *Moralia* 88C-D, 90C-E: 'How to profit by one's enemies'.

[168] Cic. *Tusc.* 4.34 discussed in Braund and Gill (eds) (1997): 5.

for feelings of hostility between Titus Annius Milo and Publius Clodius.[169] This dualistic approach to enmity that is apparent in the fables and in other literature supports Epstein's conclusion that, in Babrius' time, the attitude towards enmity (*inimicitia*) involved two quite different concepts:

> The Roman attitude toward inimicitia was complex and ambivalent. The pursuit of inimicitia and the destruction of one's enemies were firmly entrenched among those virtues Romans thought necessary for the acquisition of dignitas, virtus, status, and nobility — qualities the Roman aristocracy pursued from birth. At the same time, the Romans recognized that the single-minded pursuit of personal interests was not compatible with the best interests of the state or of humanity. The Romans sensed a conflict and resolved it only imperfectly, by lame exhortations to inimici not to forget the interests of the state or by efforts to control the worst excesses of inimici toward each other.[170]

In a similar way, the Babrian fables present ἔχθρα as an inevitable aspect of conflict and the struggle to survive, while on the other hand, there is a concern to show that ἔχθρα can lead to loss or punishment, both for the individual and the group.

i. Ancient ἔχθρα and modern hatred

There are two aspects of the concept of ἔχθρα that are of interest when we compare the ancient and modern concepts of hatred. In Babrius' fables, the expression of ἔχθρα is closely related to issues of power and hierarchy. It is viewed as an emotion that it characteristic of certain social relationships. According to Levin, the modern concept of 'hate' refers to "an individual's negative beliefs and feelings about the members of some other group of people because of their race, religious identity, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability status."[171] Ben-Ze'ev adds that in hating someone or something, we view their traits as inherently negative and dangerous.[172] Although the person may not have caused any actual harm, the fundamental nature of the person is viewed negatively and as a result, the person is seen as

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[169] Cic. *Orat.* 9.25-26.

[170] Epstein 1985: 24-25.

[171] Levin 2002: 1 quoted in Konstan 2006: 188.

[172] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 381.

worthy of hatred.[173] In the modern context, it is hate's desire for elimination that has led to it being condemned as an emotion, particularly because it has been identified as the motivation behind a number of modern atrocities.[174] As Konstan has observed, the notion of hatred against classes of individuals who are grouped together because of factors over which they have no control, such as race, sexual orientation or age, is not implicit in the term ἔχθρα as it is in the modern term. This suggests that this emotion was not necessarily condemned in the same way in classical times as it is today.

A further point of difference is that, in Babrius' fables at least, there is a clear distinction between the use of the emotion-terms ἔχθρα and θυμός; ἔχθρα is an emotion that is instinctively felt by those of higher status towards those lower down in the hierarchy, while θυμός (even though it may also involve hierarchical relationships) is provoked by specific external acts or events. In modern speech and thought, the terms 'anger' and 'hate' are not always carefully distinguished.[175] In everyday speech for example, hate may refer to relatively mild cases of dislike, to strong dislike or anger felt toward someone or something, or to the complete negation of a class of category of objects or individuals.[176] When anger and hate are distinguished, it is not the manner of expression that distinguishes them but the targets of the emotions. Thus, when anger becomes generalized so that a class of objects or agents is viewed negatively rather than one specific object or agent, then we say that the object or agent is 'hated'.[177] In Babrius' fables, it is not the nature of the target that determines whether ἔχθρα or θυμός is the appropriate term to use; it is the nature of the circumstances. This is an important finding because it

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[173] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 381.

[174] See Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 383. For an alternative view of hatred as having "irreplaceable, healthy functions", particularly for victims of violence, see Davenport 1991.

[175] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 383; Averill 1982: 167.

[176] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 383. For a study of mob hatred and the role of authority figures see Harrington 2003-2004.

[177] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 285.

demonstrates that the emotion-terms ἔχθρα and θυμός do not necessarily equate to the modern English terms 'hate' and 'anger' and that, for people in Babrius' time at least, the moral appropriateness of ἔχθρα or θυμός depended on the circumstances rather than the innate qualities of the person targeted.

IV. Ἔρως[178]

B32 is undoubtedly one of the most memorable fables in the collection. In this fable, Babrius uses the verb ἐράω to describe a weasel's passionate desire for a handsome young man. The opening line of the fable reads 'once a good-looking man was desired by a weasel' (Γαλῆ ποτ' ἀνδρὸς εὐπρεποῦς ἐρασθείσῃ: line 1). Aphrodite encourages the affair by enabling the weasel to metamorphose into a beautiful and irresistible woman. When the man sees her, he is captivated (ἡλώκει: line 5) and he immediately wants to marry her. The scene then shifts abruptly to the couple's wedding banquet. A mouse runs across the floor, the bride jumps down from the wedding couch and pursues it. The marriage feast is called off. The fable ends with the following statement: 'Eros, having played merrily, went away, for he was beaten by nature' (καλῶς παίξας / Ἔρως ἀπῆλθε· τῇ φύσει γὰρ ἡττήθη: lines 9–10). In this fable, the man is cast as a passive victim of ἔρως. He feels the emotion 'unwillingly' (οὐχ ἑκών: line 4). The woman's physical beauty is insufficient to disguise her true nature. As soon as the man realizes the discrepancy between the woman's appearance and her inner nature, ἔρως evaporates. Nature (φύσις) has the last laugh because the weasel's natural instincts have prevailed. The fable is a comic portrayal of the tendency of ἔρως to be powerful but short-lived. It also demonstrates that ἔρως is inferior to φύσις.

The theme of ἔρως in conflict with nature is also explored in B98. This fable describes a lion's feelings of ἔρως for a girl and his desire to marry her.[179] The fable says that 'a lion that was seized with desire for a young girl asked her

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[178] For a discussion of ἔρως as a feeling of passionate longing and 'erotic desire' see Konstan, 2006: 169; also see Ludwig 2002: 7-9. Babrius uses the noun ἔρως in B22.4 and B98.1. The verb ἐράω is used in B10.1, B32.1,4, B70.4 and B98.20. In B32.10, ἔρως is used as a proper noun to refer to Eros.

[179] This fable also appears in D.S. 19.25.5-6. The fable is told by a military general named Eumenes in praise of a city's decision first, not to trust envoys sent by Antigonus and second, not to submit to an invading army. If the city were to submit, Eumenes argues, the situation would be hopeless just like it is for the lion in the fable.

father for her hand' (Λέων ἁλοὺς ἔρωτι παιδὸς ὡραίης / παρὰ πατρὸς ἐμνήστευε: lines 1–2). The girl's father consents to the marriage but urges the lion to change his appearance so that he will not frighten the girl. The lion extracts his teeth, cuts his claws and presents himself before his prospective father-in-law. The members of the household then beat the lion to death. The fable ends with the following statement (lines 17–20):

> ἔκειτο δ' ἀργὸς ὥσπερ ὗς ἀποθνήσκων,
> γέροντος ἀνδρὸς ποικίλου τε τὴν γνώμην
> σοφίῃ διδαχθεὶς {ὡς ἄμικτον ἀνθρώποις
> ἐρᾶν λεόντων ἢ λέοντας ἀνθρώπων.} [180]

This fable contrasts nature with unrealistic desires and hopes that are fuelled by ἔρως. Like the man in the previous fable, the lion in this fable is a victim. The girl's father successfully manipulates the lion into foregoing his strength and power (symbolized by his claws and teeth) and then betrays him. The lion drops in status from king of the animals to a lowly pig; his punishment is brutal and there is no sympathy for his plight. The fable suggests that any attempt to change one's nature for the sake of ἔρως is absurd.

The connection between misfortune and ἔρως can also be seen in B22. In this fable, a middle-aged man is described as having two lovers, one of whom is young and the other old (ἦρα γυναικῶν δύο, νέης τε καὶ γραίης: line 5). The result of the man's busy love life is comical. The young woman wants her lover to appear younger so she plucks out the grey hairs on his head, while the old woman wants her lover to appear older and pulls out his dark hairs. Together, the two women make the man bald, thereby 'repaying each other' (ἀντέδωκαν ἀλλήλαις: line 12). The fable demonstrates how ἔρως can make a man the object of ridicule.

Another comical fable on the subject of ἔρως is B116. This fable describes a

[180] [There he lay inert, like a dying pig, having been taught by the cleverness of a shrewd old man the axiom {that loving lions is incompatible for human beings, and also lions loving human beings.}] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 138. Note that Vaio's Greek text on p.138 has a typographical error that I have not reproduced (διχαχθεὶς in line 19 instead of διδαχθεὶς).

married woman who is awoken by a handsome young man singing a serenade to her at night. The woman leaves her husband in bed, goes outside and proceeds to 'fulfil her desire' (ἐποίει τὴν προθυμίην πλήρη: line 7). Meanwhile, her husband wakes up and looks for her. When he finds her in the street outside having a good time with the boy, he does not stand around gaping (μηδὲν χανών: line 10) but tells his wife to persuade the boy to sleep in the house, which she does. The fable ends with the following statement: 'Then whenever they both wanted to do something, he was relaxed with her' (εἶτα κἀκεῖνος, / ἄμφω θελόντων δρᾶν τι, τῇδ' ἐρᾳθύμει: lines 13–14).[181] The fable appears to be drawing a contrast between the expected reaction of the husband, which would be shock and anger, and his actual reaction, which is to adopt a relaxed attitude.

In the fables, characters that experience ἔρως are presented as victims of a powerful force, whether they are male or female. For example, the weasel in B32 is metamorphosed by the goddess Aphrodite and the man who falls in love with the woman does so unwillingly; the lion in B98 is 'seized' with ἔρως, and the woman immediately desires the handsome youth when she sees him in the moonlight in B116. All of these characters are subject to the power of ἔρως and they have little hope of evading it. This is consistent with the idea which is expressed in both Greek and Roman literature that ἔρως is a powerful and

[181] Perry ignores the τῇδ' and translates the last two words to mean that the husband "amused himself with the boy" which suggests that the wife was excluded (Perry 1965: 153). Gibbs also ignores the τῇδ' and translates the sentence rather loosely as follows: "He didn't have any trouble after that, and joined in whenever the two of them wanted to do something" (Gibbs 2002: no. 574). Vaio interprets the fable to mean that the husband and wife compromise by agreeing to share the boy (Vaio 2001: 151). I agree with Vaio. Still, there remains the difficulty of determining the sense of τῇδ' ἐρᾳθύμει. The verb ῥᾳθυμέω generally means easygoing or relaxed and it has no apparent sexual connotation: see entry in LSJ. Thus, the phrase appears to indicate that the husband adopted a relaxed attitude. This interpretation is supported by the epimythion of the fable which reads: 'So it was. The moral of the fable is that it is bad to stand around gaping, when one can exact vengeance' (τουτὶ μὲν οὕτως· ἔμφασις δὲ τοῦ μύθου/ κακὸν ἐπιχαίνειν, ὅταν ἔχῃ τις ἐκτῖσαι: lines 15-16). The epimythion probably refers to the husband who exacts vengeance by doubling his own sources of pleasure.

spontaneous emotion that is difficult to resist.[182] In the fables, ἔρως is also encouraged by a strong attraction to physical beauty. The weasel in B32, for example, desires the young man because he is 'good-looking' (εὐπρεποῦς: line 1), the young man desires the woman in B32 because she is a 'beautiful woman' (καλῆς γυναικός: line 4), and the woman in B116 is attracted to the youth because he is 'exceedingly handsome' (καλὸν λίην: line 4).

As a result of its power, ἔρως causes characters to behave in ways that contradict reason and rationality. It leads to hurried and ill-considered action (B32 and B116), a willingness to sacrifice one's power and status (B98), and the desire to change one's nature (B98 and B32). In each case, reason is overcome or entirely lacking. In B98, for example, the lion's failure to use foresight is contrasted with the father-in-law's 'shrewd thought' (ποικίλου τε τὴν γνώμην: line 18), while, in B116, the woman responds to the handsome youth's serenade with spontaneous passion rather than reason. The consequences of being overwhelmed by ἔρως are consistently negative and range from death to public humiliation or victimisation. Insofar as ἔρως depends on physical attraction as a motivating force, it also tends to disappear as soon as the physical attraction evaporates. In B32, Babrius explicitly states that ἔρως is weaker than 'nature' (φύσις). The message is that 'nature' φύσις is unchanging and unrelenting.

It is also interesting to examine how female sexuality is portrayed in these fables. Women are either submissive and beautiful (as in B98) or overly keen for sex.[183] In B116, the woman is portrayed as full of enthusiasm and the encounter with the youth takes place spontaneously outside in the street. There is a contrast between the woman's eagerness for sexual gratification and the reason

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[182] See Hes. *Th.* 120-122; Ar. *Ec.* 951-976; Ar. *Lys.* 551-554; Verg. *Ecl.* 8.41-50; Ov. *Am.* 1.1.21-26 and 2.4.7-10.

[183] On the association of women with sexual excess see Konstan 1994: 180; also Halliwell 2002: 132-133. On the scarcity of ancient sources that discuss the 'sexual contentment' of Athenian citizen women see Skinner 2005: 110.

and rationality of her husband. He is portrayed as maintaining a calm demeanour, so much so that when he discovers the couple, he tells his wife 'not to panic' (μηδὲν ἐκπλήσσου: line 11)! Even after he discovers the affair, he is restrained and continues to exercise authority. In addition, B32 encourages suspicion of female beauty by suggesting that a beautiful woman may have an inner nature that is hideously ugly. In spite of this, I see a good deal of comedy in Babrius' treatment of this emotion and a level of comic distortion in how these two extremes of feminine nature are presented. Behind the comic aspect, however, there is also a moral aspect. By portraying the frailty of ἔρως when confronted by nature, as well as the negative consequences of ἔρως and the associated loss of reason and rationality, I would suggest that Babrius is also taking a negative moral stance toward the emotion. Like Seneca, who associated sexual desire with moral decline, Babrius' fables illustrate how ἔρως has the potential to bring ruin, shame, disgrace and death.[184]

i. Ancient ἔρως and modern love

Babrius' concept of ἔρως highlights the fact that the very starting point for the classical and modern understanding of erotic desire differs. While ἔρως was conceived as an emotion brought about by an external force, the modern concept of this emotion, in the discipline of psychology at least, is that it is either an internal state of feeling or a biological drive.[185] For the classical Greeks and Romans, ἔρως was a divine force and a fundamental principle in the creation of the universe that motivated reproductive activity.[186] The modern concept is that this emotion is a powerful inner force that is connected with our primitive instincts of survival as a species. It is thought to be powerful because

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[184] See Sen. *Dial.* 5.1-5.4. Also Hor. *Odes* 3.6. For discussions of Roman disquiet about lack of self-restraint, luxurious living and sexual excess see Edwards 1993: 173-175; Skinner 2005: 211. For a discussion of Augustus' attempts to reinforce family values by making adultery amongst the upper classes a criminal offence (the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis*) see Langlands 2006: 20.

[185] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 50; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 411.

[186] Hes. *Th.* 116-122. For an illuminating discussion of ἔρως as a potentially disruptive force see Konstan 1994: 179.

it is often mixed with other emotions, such as joy, jealousy, loneliness, sadness, fear and anger.[187]

An important area of agreement is that erotic desire is both spontaneous and intense. The fables suggest that ἔρως arises suddenly and overwhelms the individual, turning him/her into a victim. Similarly, in the modern era, sexual desire is conceptualised as a spontaneous, passionate and overwhelming emotion.[188] In both eras, physical attraction is seen as playing a key role in intensifying the emotion.[189] Erotic desire is also viewed as a non-deliberative emotion[190] that is often transient.[191] There is a greater divergence, however, in how the consequences of erotic desire are conceptualized. Babrius' fables focus on negative consequences, including death, social ridicule and victimization. The modern era tends to focus more on the impact of the loss of love on an individual's internal state, such as loss of self-esteem, and feelings of loneliness, sadness, and jealousy.[192]

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[187] Hatfield and Rapson 1993: 599.
[188] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 345; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 416.
[189] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 416.
[190] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 345; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 416.
[191] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 415-416.
[192] Hatfield and Rapson 1993: 599. On jealousy, anger and fear and their relationship to love and desire see Izard 1991: 407.

V. Χάρις[193]

The term χάρις appears on nine occasions in the fables.[194] In the majority of cases, the term is used in the concrete sense of a 'favour' and is closely connected to the principle of reciprocity.[195] In a few cases, however, the term is also used to denote a feeling of gratitude on the part of a benefactor or recipient. In B48, for example, a dog approaches a herm that is standing by a roadside. The dog greets the herm and says that by anointing it he wants to honour the god (lines 3–5). Hermes orders the dog not to urinate upon his herm. In fact, he says, he will be grateful if the dog does not honour him at all (χάριν εἴσομαί σοι· καὶ πλέον με μὴ τίμα: line 8).[196] The dog's desire to show his reverence to the god is commendable but his suggested method of doing so is not. Thus Hermes, who would ordinarily expect and accept worship and reverence, is forced to reject this particular offer of worship. The humour lies in the contrast between the animal and divine worlds; the dog thinking that he will be 'anointing' the herm while Hermes interprets the same act as an insult.

B27 illustrates that one is not obliged to feel χάρις when the service performed was unhelpful. In this fable, a man traps and binds up a weasel and is about to drown it in a pool of water. The weasel says to the man: "What bad thanks you render for helping you hunt mice and lizards" ("ὡς κακὴν χάριν τίνεις / ὧν ὠφέλουν θηρῶσα μῦς τε καὶ σαύρας": lines 3-4). The man acknowledges the weasel's complaint but adds that the weasel, in addition to hunting mice and lizards, was attacking the birds in the house. Thus, the weasel was doing more harm than good. The fable demonstrates that there can be no expectation of

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[193] This term has a number of possible meanings (see entry in LSJ). In an objective sense the term is used to describe outward grace or beauty. In a subjective sense, it can mean grace, kindness or goodwill on the part of the doer, as well as gratitude or a sense of thankfulness on the part of the receiver. In a concrete sense, the term refers to a favour. The term can also refer to delight in a thing or a type of homage. This section explores the use of the term in the sense of gratitude or thankfulness on the part of a receiver.

[194] See B10.11, B27.3, B48.8, B50.15, B85.6, B92.9, B107.8 and B122.6, 9.

[195] For further discussion of this principle see the preceding chapter.

[196] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 76.

reciprocity if the act in question was not beneficial or well-intentioned.

A similar example is B50. In this fable, a fox that is fleeing from a hunter asks a woodcutter to help conceal him. The woodcutter agrees and swears an oath not to betray the fox. When the hunter approaches the woodcutter and asks him if he has seen the fox, the woodcutter denies that he has but points to the fox's hiding place. The hunter does not understand the gesture and goes on his way. When the fox emerges, the woodcutter says to the fox: "You owe me a debt of gratitude for saving your life" ("ζωαγρίους μοι χάριτας ... ὀφλήσεις": line 15). The fox denies this and declares that although the woodcutter saved him with his words, he killed him with his gestures. The fable demonstrates that χάρις is appropriate only when the act on which the expectation of reciprocity relies was performed in good faith. The fable also reinforces the importance of keeping an oath.

B10 (already discussed above in the context of χολή) also provides a curious example of misdirected χάρις. Here, as we noted earlier, a man is said to be in love with one of his slave-girls. In spite of the fact that she is unattractive, he showers her with gifts. She, in turn, gives thanks and prays to Aphrodite, as if the goddess is responsible for her fortunate situation. Aphrodite appears to the slave in a dream and says: "Do not feel gratitude to me as if I make you beautiful" (μή μοι χάριν σχῇς ὡς καλήν σε ποιούσῃ: line 11). The goddess adds that she is angry with the slave's master for thinking that the girl is beautiful. The fable demonstrates that it is inappropriate to express gratitude for a benefit that is gained not because of personal merit but because of the faulty perceptions of another.

In Babrius' fables, the emotion-term χάρις is used to refer to a feeling that is experienced by the recipient of a kindness. Babrius does not focus on χάρις in the sense of a unilateral expression of 'kindness' or 'goodwill' that is performed

without any expectation of a reward. Rather, the fables explore the expectations of reciprocity that exist between a benefactor and a recipient and the circumstances when χάρις is, or is not, owed. When Babrius uses χάρις in the sense of a favour, it is coupled with verbs such as τίνω 'to pay a debt/price' (B107.8), ὀφλισκάνω 'to owe' (B50.15), and δίδωμι 'to grant/allow' (B122.6). When Babrius uses the term χάρις in the sense of 'gratitude', it is coupled with verbs such as ἔχω 'to have/hold' (B10.11) and οἶδα 'to know' (B48.8). This terminological distinction supports the view that the emotion of gratitude and the act of repayment were separate concepts. In this way, Babrius' presentation of χάρις in the fables adds further weight to Konstan's argument that the term χάρις does, at times, indicate the emotion of 'gratitude', not just the act of reciprocity itself.[197]

Generally speaking, the fables tend to portray situations in which χάρις does not exist, either because the proposed gift or favour is insulting to the recipient, was never bestowed, or is undeserved. The relationships that are depicted in these fables generally involve characters of unequal status, such as god/animal (B48), man/animal (B27) and goddess/slave (B10). This indicates that the expression of χάρις and the understanding of the dynamics and expectations of reciprocity are not always straightforward in relationships involving those of different status. The fables suggest that a simplistic ideal of χάρις and goodwill fails to reflect the complexities and difficulties that arise in some social interactions. The fables illustrate that a kindness must be repaid in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons and to the right person. In particular, the fables imply that χάρις depends on both the benefactor and recipient valuing the gift in a similar way and that χάρις is only expected when a real benefit has been received.

These moral lessons agree with many of the general philosophical precepts

[197] See Konstan 2006: 164.

about χάρις that are found in other sources from the classical world. Aristotle, for example, states that the definition of a kindness for which one feels χάρις is an act that is performed without self-interest and from pure motives. Aristotle defines χάρις as follows: 'Let a kindness then, according to which the person feeling it is said to perform a service, be to render service to one in need, not for the sake of something, nor in order that some service be rendered to himself, but in order that something (be done) for that person.' (ἔστω δὴ χάρις, καθ' ἣν ὁ ἔχων λέγεται χάριν ὑπουργεῖν δεομένῳ μὴ ἀντί τινος, μηδ' ἵνα τι αὐτῷ τῷ ὑπουργοῦντι, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἐκείνῳ τι).[198] Aristotle adds that the kindness will be of greater magnitude and significance if the receiver is in great need (σφόδρα δεομένῳ) or if the circumstances are particularly difficult, such as exile or poverty.[199] According to Aristotle, situations in which χάρις is not obligatory are situations in which the benefactor performs the act for his or her own sake, by chance, by force, or when the service itself is insignificant.[200] It is exactly these sorts of scenarios that are illustrated in Babrius' fables.

Roman writers and philosophers, who use the emotion-term *gratia* to express the concept of 'gratitude', also emphasise the importance of expressing this sentiment in the appropriate way.[201] An extensive discussion of this concept has survived in Seneca's treatise *De Beneficiis*. Seneca's starting point is an

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[198] Arist. *Rh.* 2.7.2. For a discussion of the Greek text of this passage see Konstan 2006: 159-160. For discussion of the notion that a benefactor receives greater pleasure from the act of giving, see Arist. *NE.* 9.7.1-7. For the contrast between χάρις and ἀπέχθεια ('enmity') see X. *Mem.* 2.7.9. On χάρις as the opposite of anger, see Phld. *Ir.* 46.18-41. On the χάρις that is owed to one's parents, see X. *Mem.* 2.2.3-14; D.49.1. On the bond that is implied by χάρις, as well as the ongoing nature of reciprocal relationships see Tecmessa's emotional appeal to Ajax in S. *Aj.* 520-524.

[199] Arist. *Rh.* 2.7.2-4.

[200] Arist. *Rh.* 2.7.5-7.

[201] The term *gratia* in Latin has a similarly wide range of meanings to the term χάρις in Greek. It can refer to esteem or liking; agreeableness; a favour which one shows to another; and gratitude or thankfulness. Cicero says that mankind depends on the kindness of friends, which in turn is dependent on "memory and gratitude" (*memoria et gratia*): Cic. *Planc.* 33.80-82. Cicero also talks of genuine goodwill as engendering an obligation to repay the kindness: Cic. *Off.* 1.15.47-48. For a discussion of the notion of obligation in various other ancient sources see Millett 1991: 123-6.

observation about the prevalence of ingratitude in the society of his day.[202] This theme is reinforced throughout the work.[203] Seneca describes ingratitude as a common vice that destroys the union of the human race (*quoniam nihil aeque concordiam humani generis dissociat ac distrahit, quam hoc uitium*).[204] According to Seneca, ingratitude is caused by excessive self-esteem, greed or jealousy (2.26). To counter this, men must be taught to be willing to give, willing to receive, and willing to repay others (1.4). Seneca defines the giving of a benefit as a natural and impulsive act that bestows pleasure (*Beneuola actio tribuens gaudium, capiensque tribuendo, in id quod facit prona, et sponte sua parata*).[205] The kind of benefits that should be given are those that are necessary, useful and pleasant (1.11). As for the manner in which benefits should be conferred, Seneca recommends that they should be given with discretion (1.15) and that they should be given willingly, quickly and without hesitation (2.1). Ideally, a benefactor should bestow a benefit before the recipient has asked for it and this requires sensitivity in anticipating the needs of others (2.1). Furthermore, if a man promises to bestow a benefit he should keep that promise (4.35). The benefit itself should be bestowed as a free gift and without 'strings attached' (4.3 and 4.11).[206] The benefactor should not give something only to expect that he will receive something of equal value in return (4.11–12).

By outlining Seneca's doctrines on the subject of *gratia*, I do not mean to suggest that Babrius was directly influenced by Seneca's philosophical writings. As Morgan notes, the 'orientation' of works of popular morality such as Babrius' fables and works of 'high' philosophy are very different.[207] Yet, poets such as Babrius are interested in exploring the appropriate circumstances for the

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[202] Sen. *Ben.* 1.1-2.
[203] Sen. *Ben.* 1.1, 1.4, 4.18 and 7.27.
[204] Sen. *Ben.* 4.18.
[205] Sen. *Ben.* 1.6.1.
[206] In this way, a debt of gratitude differs from other financial or commercial debts (see Harpham 2004: 24).
[207] Morgan 2007: 274.

expression of certain emotions, and we can see that this interest is shared by other ancient writers and philosophers. Although the approach and methodology may differ, fabulists and philosophers nonetheless traverse the same moral 'terrain'.[208]

In the fables, references to χάρις appear alongside negative imperatives (B48.8 and B10.11), exclamations (B27.3) and statements that express expectations about behaviour (B50.3–5).[209] There is a noticeable lack of polite directives or polite forms of address in these utterances.[210] Negative imperatives, in particular, are used by those who have superior status, such as Hermes talking to the dog in B48 or Aphrodite talking to the slave-girl in B10. It is likely, in my view, that these linguistic expressions reflect actual linguistic and cultural practices because in order for the fables to appear authentic and to function as metaphors, they must present recognizable forms of behaviour. This, in turn, suggests that in situations where a kindness might be performed in the wrong way, at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons or to the wrong person, it was acceptable for a person of superior status to be blunt in telling his or her inferior that an expression of χάρις was unnecessary.

i. Ancient χάρις and modern gratitude

Babrius explores the theme of χάρις in contexts that set two individuals in opposition. This suits the structure and brevity of the fable but it also matches findings from modern research into the psychology of the emotion of gratitude. Modern studies suggest that it is more common for people to recall feeling grateful to a particular person rather than feeling gratitude of a more general

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[208] See Morgan 2007: 298-299.

[209] Characters that use χάρις to refer to a 'favour' sometimes demand one using an imperative (B122.6); indicate how they want the favour to be performed (B92.9-10), or indicate they might repay the favour at some point in the future (B107.8).

[210] On the degrees of politeness that are implicit in different forms of Greek commands see Probert and Dickey 2005.

and impersonal kind, such as gratitude to life or destiny.[211] Gratitude is said to be more strongly felt and better remembered in circumstances that involve one-on-one interactions. A related point of interest is that Babrius' fables about χάρις typically involve interactions between strangers. Modern research suggests that people are more likely to recall a feeling of gratitude toward a stranger than gratitude toward a family member.[212] Perhaps acts of kindness by strangers are more likely to be recalled because of the lack of expectation or obligation insofar as strangers are concerned or, conversely, because people tend to expect a greater level of support from their family.[213]

There also appears to be some similarity in the elements that are thought to be necessary for gratitude. Gratitude has been described as a combination of determinants, namely, the recipient's perceptions of the intention of the benefactor, the cost to the benefactor in providing the benefit, and the value of the benefit.[214] Babrius portrays situations in which the cost to the benefactor is too high (B27), the value of the benefit is low (B48), and the benefactor is dishonest (B50). Although Babrius depicts circumstances in which the moral imperative to show χάρις is absent (such as where there is no gift or act of kindness or the proposed service is undesirable), Babrius' fables also point to ideal forms of behaviour. For example, the fables imply that χάρις is appropriate only when a benefactor has acted intentionally and with goodwill; that χάρις depends on both the giver and receiver valuing the gift in a similar way, and that χάρις is only called for when a real benefit has been received. In

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[211] Teigen 1997: 320.

[212] Teigen 1997: 320.

[213] In the devastating Victorian bushfires of February 2009, Australians who had lost their homes received both government handouts and aid from the Red Cross but it was the generosity of strangers that seemed to prompt the most intense feelings of gratitude. A mother who was seeking clothes for her 15-month old son expressed her amazement at the quantity and rapidity of the donations. Another fire victim told a story of a stranger who stopped by the side of the road when he saw a man in need: "he went down and he took off his socks and his boots and gave them to him – now that is just the ultimate charity": ABC News Video, 'Generosity of Strangers: Donations and offers of help are pouring in from around Australia, for the victims of the Australian bushfires', 11 February 2009.

[214] Tesser et al 1968; also see McCullough et al. 2001.

this sense, the fables portray negative examples but also reinforce the potential of χάρις to have a beneficial impact on relationships.

Modern research helps us to understand how gratitude can benefit personal and social relationships.[215] Fredrickson, for example, suggests that feelings of gratitude build social bonds and friendships and broaden people's thought–action repertoires by encouraging them to think of creative ways of expressing their gratitude.[216] In the smaller communities that existed in classical times, when much depended on the strength of social bonds and friendships, recognition of the beneficial impacts of χάρις no doubt made good practical sense.

[215] McCullough, Emmons and Tsang 2002.

[216] Fredrickson 2004: 147; also see Emmons and McCullough 2003.

VI. Λύπη and Χαίρω

The noun λύπη appears in B12.24, B12.27, B19.7, B23.11, B24.5, B43.4, B95.46 and B136.9. There are also fables that contain idiomatic expressions such as 'woe is me' (οἴμοι) and we see these in B7.14, B118.9, and B122.14. To indicate the contrasting emotional state, Babrius uses the verb χαίρω.[217]

An example of the use the term λύπη can be found in B12. This fable is based on the myth of Tereus, Procne and Philomela.[218] The nightingale represents Procne while the swallow represents Philomela.[219] The fable depicts events that take place after the metamorphosis of the two sisters into birds. The swallow discovers that her sister is living alone in a wild forest. She urges her sister to return to civilization, to live with her as a companion and to sing for farmers rather than wild beasts. The nightingale responds, saying that she wishes to stay in the wilderness because 'every house and dealing with men aggravates the grief of old misfortunes' (οἶκος δέ μοι πᾶς κἀπίμιξις ἀνθρώπων / λύπην παλαιῶν συμφορῶν ἀναξαίνει: lines 23–24). The nightingale is described as 'lamenting' (ἀπεθρήνει: line 3) the untimely death of her child Itys. The fable establishes a strong contrast between civilization and the wilderness which, in turn, reflects a contrast between contrasting emotional states. The nightingale's

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[217] For examples of the use of the verb χαίρω see B13.9, B24.9, B74.17, B95.62, B98.4, B102.2, B120.1, B122.4, B129.2 and B130.5. For the contrast between λύπη and τό χαίρειν see S. *Aj.* 556; E. *Alc.* 239-40; Pl. *Phd.* 60c.

[218] According to this myth, Tereus (King of Thrace) raped his wife's sister (Philomela) and then cut out her tongue to prevent her from revealing the crime. Philomela managed to inform her sister (Procne) by weaving the story into a tapestry. The two women took their revenge on Tereus by killing the king's son Itys and serving the child to him as a meal. Ultimately, the sisters were metamorphosed into birds, and Tereus was transformed into a hoopoe. The myth serves an aetiological function, explaining why the nightingale dwells apart from mankind in the forest. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope refers to the myth to describe her grief for Odysseus' absence (although, ironically, she is speaking to Odysseus who is disguised as a beggar): see *Od.* 19. 518-529. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates disputes the idea that the nightingale and swallow sing in lamentation. Socrates suggests that the birds sing because they know of the blessings that come after death. Socrates' reinterpretation of this well-known myth highlights the exceptionality of his attitude towards death: see *Phd.* 85A.

[219] In Babrius' fable, the metamorphosis of Procne into a nightingale and Philomela into a swallow is in accordance with the Greek version of the myth. Roman poets tend to present Procne as the swallow and Philomela as the nightingale (see Ov. *Met.* 6.667-670).

preference for the unforgiving wilderness reflects her desire to retreat from mankind as well as the desolation and suffering that characterises her inner emotional state. There is a suggestion that the nightingale's chosen lifestyle is unnecessarily difficult and is connected with self-torment as Babrius describes the landscape as 'lonely' (ἐρήμοις: line 2), with 'dew by night' (ἔννυχος στίβη: line 16) and 'burning heat' (καῦμα: line 17) in the daytime.[220] The swallow, in contrast, still dwells among the houses of men despite the unpleasantness of the past. There is also a strong contrast between emotion and rationality. The nightingale's grief is inconsolable and she is unaffected by reason and persuasion. The swallow, in contrast, urges the nightingale to put aside her grief and to be persuaded by wise counsel.

In a later fable, however, the swallow's ongoing interaction with civilization ultimately leads to tragedy. In B118, a swallow builds its nest in the wall of a courthouse and raises seven chicks. To her great dismay, a snake crawls out a hole in the wall and devours all of the chicks one by one. The fable ends with the following lament by the swallow (lines 7–11):

...] ἡ δὲ δειλαίη
παίδων ἀώρων συμφορὰς ἐπεθρήνει,
"οἴμοι" λέγουσα, "τῆς ἐμῆς ἐγὼ μοίρης·
ὅπου νόμοι γὰρ καὶ θέμιστες ἀνθρώπων,
ἔνθεν χελιδὼν ἠδικημένη φεύγω." [221]

The description of the swallow's λύπη in this fable closely matches the description of the nightingale's λύπη in B12. In both fables, the birds are described as mourning the 'untimely death' of their children (B118.8; B12.4) and in both fables, the birds resolve to flee from mankind (B118.11; B12.1–3). The similarity between the two fables highlights the irony of the swallow's speech in the earlier fable. In B12, the swallow had tried to convince her sister to return to civilization and to share her sweet voice with mankind. In B118, the swallow

[220] For discussion see Vaio 2001: 32-33.

[221] [The miserable swallow, mourning the untimely death of her children said "Woe is me and my fate, for wherever there are laws and rules of men, I flee from there as a swallow who has been wronged."]

herself suffers tragedy because of the inability of civilization and justice (symbolised by the courthouse) to protect her family. In the earlier fable, the swallow had been the voice of reason and rationality. Now she echoes the emotional grief of her sister.

The loss of a loved one is the most sombre event associated with the use of the emotion-term λύπη in the fables. Other events that prompt λύπη are less grave and the emotion itself is of a more temporary nature. Examples include the vain deer in B43 that feels λύπη because of the ugliness of its hooves (ποδῶν ἐλυπήθη: line 4); the fox that deludes his feeling of λύπη in B19 because it cannot reach some grapes (βουκολοῦσα τὴν λύπην: line 7); an ox-driver in B23 who feels λύπη on seeing his bull being devoured by a lion (ἐκφορουμένους λύπης: line 11), and the lion that feels λύπη in B95 when it fails to snatch the deer that has been lured into its lair (εἶχε ... λύπη: line 46). In B24 (also discussed above in Chapter Four), λύπη is contrasted with 'cheerful revelry' (ἱλαροὺς ... κώμους: line 2). The toad warns his companions that they should not be celebrating the sun's wedding lest the sun has a child that is even more adept at drying up all the springs and ponds. The toad says: "For us this is a matter of anxieties and grief, not hymns or celebrations" ("οὐχὶ παιάνων / τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἡμῖν, φροντίδων δὲ καὶ λύπης": lines 4-5). In this fable, λύπη is a side-effect of the virtue of foresight.

The contrasting emotional state to λύπη is signified by the verb χαίρω.[222] This verb is used to describe a frog's enjoyment in living in shadows in B120 (ὁ σκιῇ χαίρων: line 1), for example, and a man's pleasure in watching a frolicking puppy in B129 (<τὸ> κυνίδιον δ' ἔχαιρε: line 2). Aside from this, characters tend to use the verb disingenuously. In B130 (discussed above in Chapter Five), for example, a fox invites a wolf to enter a trap and to take the meat that is inside.

[222] The imperative form of this verb is used in the fables as a greeting or to bid a person farewell (see B48.3, B63.4, B75.11, B95.12, B95.28, B100.9, B103.13 and B108.28). I will not discuss this usage.

The fox says "Come this way, take it and good luck to you" (ἦκε τῆδε καὶ δέχου χαίρων: line 5). As soon as the wolf does so, the trap snaps shut and the wolf is badly injured. In B122 (discussed above in Chapter Four), the ass with the thorn in its hoof expresses its joy upon meeting the wolf. The ass says "I'm pleased I came across you" (σοὶ δὲ συμβαλὼν χαίρω: line 4). As soon as the wolf removes the thorn, the ass kicks the wolf in the head and runs away. In B98, a girl's father expresses his joy at the prospect of his daughter marrying a lion. The father says "I give her in marriage and give her happily" (δίδωμι γῆμαι ... καὶ διδοὺς χαίρω: line 4). As soon as the lion has removed its claws and teeth in readiness for the marriage, the lion is set upon and beaten to death. In other fables too, the verb χαίρω is negated. We see this in B74, in which the elderly are described as 'displeased to see strangers' (ξένοισιν οὐ χαίρει: line 17) and in B102 when the friendly lion king is described as 'not inclined to do everything by means of force' (οὐδὲ πάντα τῇ βίῃ χαίρων: line 2). In B95, χαίρω is negated in order to indicate a threat when the deer says to the fox "now you will regret it" (νῦν μὲν οὐχὶ χαιρήσεις: line 62).

In his analysis of the classical Greek conception of grief, Konstan questions whether grief was conceived of as an emotion at all, even though it was known to the ancient Greeks and described using terms such as λύπη.[223] Konstan points to the absence of a discussion of grief in Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric and suggests that Aristotle did not view λύπη in the same way as other emotions because it was not viewed as a 'social' emotion.[224] Grief over the loss of a loved one was simply seen as painful and one could do nothing about it except wait for the pain to subside.[225] The portrayal of λύπη in Babrius' fables casts some doubt on Konstan's suggestion that grief was not conceived of as an emotion. The fables indicate that, in Babrius' time at least, λύπη was regarded as an emotional state insofar as the term referred to 'grief' rather than some

[223] See Konstan 2006: 244.
[224] Konstan 2006: 246-248.
[225] Konstan 2006: 248.

milder form of distress. In a number of the fables examined above, λύπη is contrasted with rationality and reason and this too, suggests that it was conceived of as an emotion. Furthermore, in B12 and B118, λύπη is portrayed as having a social dimension in that the characters in both fables are concerned about the effects of λύπη being clearly visible to others. Both protagonists withdraw from the community precisely because they wish to avoid the humiliation of their grief being witnessed by others. In this way, the fables suggest that there is an intimate connection between the expression of λύπη and concerns about the perception of oneself by others in society.[226]

In the fables, the emotion-term λύπη is treated in the most serious light when it refers to the loss of a loved one. In other circumstances, λύπη is used to refer to temporary and relatively minor forms of distress caused by lost opportunities, unattainable gains or one's personal appearance. The manner of coping with the emotion varies. Grief is portrayed as an enduring and overwhelming emotional state that leads to a desire for social isolation. Distress, on the other hand, can be avoided, either by appealing to the gods or using self-deception as a coping mechanism. In this respect, the gender of the protagonist appears to be important. In both of the fables that depict extreme grief, the protagonists are female and the λύπη is particularly intense and overwhelming because it is brought on by the loss of a child.[227] In the remaining fables which depict minor forms of distress, all of the characters are male. This may suggest that λύπη was viewed as less justifiable and appropriate for men.

These gender differences may reflect social expectations as to the appropriate

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[226] In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for example, the second messenger says "those griefs are hardest to bear which are seen to be of our own choice" (τῶν δὲ πημονῶν / μάλιστα λυποῦσ' αἳ φανῶσ' αὐθαίρετοι): S. *OT* 1230. This statement indicates that grief is exceedingly difficult to bear when the causes of the grief are self-inflicted as well as in full view of wider society.

[227] This is consistent with the portrayal of distressed mothers elsewhere in Greek literature: see E. *Hec.* 67-85; S. *OT* 1060-1061; E. *Tr.* 140-150. For a parody of a mother's grief see Plaut. *Truc.* 2.5.1-7.

ways for men and women to express λύπη. Cicero maintained that a wise man should not be subject to these sorts of emotions because their expression reduces a man's moral worth in the eyes of others.[228] Open expressions of grief such as wailing, lamentation, beating oneself, and covering oneself with dirt, all of which were characteristic of grieving women, are described by Cicero as despicable and futile.[229] In dealing with the death of his own daughter Tullia, Cicero plunged himself into writing a philosophical work about grief and planning the building of a shrine to his daughter.[230] His letters also indicate his attempts to reason himself out of his distressed emotional state.[231] Cicero praises those who bear grief with restraint and dignity;[232] he accepts distress as an inevitable feature of the human condition,[233] and he advises others that philosophy is the best consolation in times of sorrow.[234]

The notion that grief can be reasoned with is presented in B12 when the swallow tries to reason with her sister and persuade her to return to the company of men. This too may reflect the contemporary interest in consolatory rhetoric. According to Cicero, one of the best remedies for distress, in all of its varied forms, was the consolatory speech or epistle.[235] An entire genre of consolation literature from the Roman world was devoted to applying reason and argument to *dolor* or 'grief' in order to cure the individual, and society, of this 'sickness'.[236] The core objective of these consolatory speeches was to maintain that grief should not overcome an individual to the point where he/she is unable to function in society. Instead, consolation literature offered

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[228] Cic. *Tusc.* 3.11.24-26. Cicero uses the term *aegritudo*. For a discussion of the nuances of this term see Erskine 1997: 40.
[229] Cic. *Tusc.* 3.26.62 and 3.28.67ff.
[230] See Cic. *Att.* 12.14.
[231] Cic. *id Fam.* 4.6.
[232] Cic. *De Amicitia* 2.8.
[233] Cic. *De Amicitia* 13.48.
[234] Cic. *id. Fam.* 4.3. In Plutarch's letter of consolation to his wife, he adopts a similar attitude: see Plu. *Moralia* 7.608-612: 'Consolation to his wife'.
[235] Cic. *Tusc.* 3.31.76-79.
[236] See Ochs 1993.

reassurance through reference to social life:

> The fears and uncertainties of social displacement, disjuncture, and disorganization brought about by the death of a family member would create a rhetorical situation, the resolution of which must both reassure and reinforce.[237]

In this way, the swallow's speech in B12 can be read as an example of consolatory rhetoric. The retreat from civilization and the giving way to grief represent forms of social disjuncture which the skills of oratorical persuasion attempt to redress. Ironically, however, the rhetoric is delivered by a female character to another female and it is unsuccessful.

To indicate the opposite of λύπη, Babrius generally uses the verb χαίρω. Yet, there are only two fables in which the verb χαίρω refers to a simple and straightforward feeling of pleasure (B120.1 and B129.2) and in both of these cases an individual experiences the positive emotion in isolation. In the remaining fables, all of which involve interactions between characters, the verb is either negated to indicate displeasure or the verb is used to create a false impression of civility and friendship when the real intention is to harm the other party. One could conclude that for Babrius, joyful emotions are only possible for the individual in isolation. It is not an emotional state that is inspired by social interaction. This represents a rather cynical view but one that is consistent with the satirical tone of the collection more generally.

i. Ancient λύπη and χαίρω; modern grief and joy

A comparison of the conception of these emotions in the Babrian fables and the modern conception of grief reveals some interesting similarities. In modern times, grief is also conceived of as a profound form of sadness that is brought about by the loss of someone valued and beloved.[238] There is also some similarity in the fact that one of the most extreme forms of grief is said to be that

[237] Ochs 1993: 86.
[238] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 467.

of a parent who has lost a child.[239] In these instances, bereavement is said to be an especially long process and although the impact of the grief may lessen, it may continue over the course of a lifetime.[240] As in the ancient world, the modern conception of grief makes a distinction between the normal expression of grief and socially aberrant forms. Normal grief is said to be psychologically adaptive in that it enables an individual to work through his or her grief and regain personal autonomy.[241] Certain social customs are thought to help people to deal with grief in a normal way by helping them to maintain their social connections[242] while unhealthy expressions of grief are said to involve isolation and a permanent feelings of intense sadness that can lead to depression.[243]

The differences between the ancient and modern outlook are more pronounced in the conception of joy as an emotion. Babrius' fables adopt a cynical approach by suggesting that the individual cannot expect to experience this emotion in the course of social interaction. In contrast, modern psychology suggests that the majority of joyful experiences arise from social interactions and relations.[244] According to psychologists, the prototype of the 'joyful person' is someone who is socially outgoing, eager for contact with others, and desirous of sharing and communicating his or her positive feelings.[245] Joyfulness is also said to have positive social effects in that joyful people are more likely to see the better side of their fellow human beings.[246] This can lead to the development of affection

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[239] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 233; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 468.

[240] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 233; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 468.

[241] Izard 1991: 205. The question of how well an individual deals with grief is thought to depend on a number of different factors including cultural and familial pressures; the developmental history of the individual; the nature of the relationship with the lost individual; the type and suddenness of the loss; and the quality and nature of support from significant others in one's network (see Power and Dalgleish 2008: 232–3). For a discussion of the potentially positive functions of grief see Averill 1968.

[242] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 469.

[243] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 233. Also see Rude, Maestas and Neff 2007: 844.

[244] Izard 1991: 132, 162.

[245] Shaver et al. 1987: 1078.

[246] Izard 1991: 137.

for other people and the building of mutual trust.[247] At the same time, modern psychologists recognise that joy can manifest itself in negative ways when it is combined with contempt or a desire to triumph over other people.[248] This is closer to Babrius' conception of the emotion in the fables, in which the verb χαίρω is used disingenuously for the purpose of taking advantage of others.

[247] Izard 1991: 139.
[248] Izard 1991: 142.

VII. Φόβος and Θάρσος

The emotion-terms φόβος and θάρσος appear often in Babrius' fables. The noun φόβος appears in B1.3, B26.4 and B95.67. The adjective φοβερός appears in B1.16, B95.22, B102.12 and B139.2, and the verb φοβέω appears in B26.11 and B108.32. The verb θαρσέω appears in B1.4, B1.13, B25.8, B31.12, B34.10 and B95.33.[249]

B26 illustrates the difference between φόβος that is inspired by an empty threat and φόβος that is inspired by real danger. In this fable, some cranes are feeding upon wheat grain that has been scattered in the fields. A farmer brandishes an empty sling and chases the birds 'making them stricken with fear' (αὐτὰς τῷ φόβῳ καταπλήσσων: line 4). The cranes, realising that the sling is empty, ignore the farmer. The farmer then throws stones at the birds, killing a great number of them. One of the cranes urges the others to flee to the land of the Pygmies. It says "this man no longer seems to frighten us but now he also starts to do something" (ἄνθρωπος οὗτος οὐκέτ' ἐκφοβεῖν ἡμας / ἔοικεν, ἤδη δ' ἄρχεταί τι καὶ πράσσειν: lines 11–12). The fable demonstrates that fear diminishes over time if the threat is not realized and, conversely, that fear is only a motivator when a threat is real and imminent.

B108 demonstrates that some are prepared to live in fear for the sake of certain benefits while others are not. The fable tells the story of a city mouse that visits his friend in the country to have dinner and is appalled at the meager offerings. He invites the country mouse to visit him and to enjoy the abundance of food that is available in his home (lines 8–13). On arrival, the mice proceed to steal some food from a pantry. When the pantry door suddenly opens, the country mouse leaps up, flees into a dark corner and clings to the city mouse (lines 21–

[249] The verb τολμάω is also used and it appears in B92.1, B95.63 and B98.8. The adjective ἄτολμος is used in B25.4.

23). A second attempt to steal food also fails. Ultimately, the country mouse decides to return home. He says (at lines 28–32):

> "τοιαῦτα δειπνῶν" εἶπε "χαῖρε καὶ πλούτει,
> καὶ τοῖς περισσοῖς αὐτὸς ἐντρύφα δείπνοις,
> ἔχων τὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα μεστὰ κινδύνων.
> ἐγὼ δὲ λιτῆς οὐκ ἀφέξομαι βώλου,
> ὑφ' ἣν τὰ κρίμνα μὴ φοβούμενος τρώγω."[250]

The fable advises that a simple life that is lived without fear is preferable to a luxurious life in which one is plagued by anxieties.

B1 and B92 illustrate the contrast between φόβος and θάρσος. In B92, a hunter who is tracking a lion is described as 'not courageous' (οὐχὶ τολμήεις: line 1). He asks a timber-feller whether he has seen any lion tracks. The timber-feller replies that he can not only show him the tracks but the lion as well. The hunter turns pale and says through chattering teeth: "Don't show greater kindness to me than what I ask. Tell me about the tracks but don't show me the lion" ("μή μοι χαρίζου" φησί "πλεῖον οὗ χρήζω, / τὸ δ' ἴχνος εἰπέ· τὸν λέοντα μὴ δείξῃς": lines 9–10). In B1 the hunter is portrayed in a more fearsome light. He enters the forest carrying a bow and all the creatures run away 'full of fear' (φόβου ... πλήρης: line 3). Only the lion is described as 'confident enough to fight him' (θαρσήσας / αὐτῷ μάχεσθαι: lines 4–5). The hunter tells the lion to greet his messenger and he shoots the lion with one of his arrows. The lion is then seized with fear and flees. When a fox jeers at the lion and tells it to 'be brave' (θαρσεῖν: line 13) and make a stand, the lion says that he can tell just from the hunter's messenger how 'fearsome' (φοβερός: line 16) the hunter is.

The fables that incorporate the verb θαρσέω tend to involve naturally timid creatures. In B25, for example, the hares are described as the 'most listless' (ἀδρανέστατοι: line 3) and 'cowardly' (ἄτολμοι: line 4) of living creatures.

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[250] ["Farewell and enjoy yourself dining on such things and luxuriating in the abundant foods. These many things are full of danger. I will not keep away from the simple soil, beneath which I gnaw at barley-meal without being afraid."]

They resolve to drown themselves in a lake.[251] When they reach the shore of the lake, they happen to startle some frogs. One of the hares 'gains confidence' (θαρσήσας: line 8) from this and says to the others: "Let's go back now. It is no longer necessary to die, for I see others who are weaker than us" ("ἄψ νῦν ἴωμεν. οὐκέτι χρεὼν θνήσκειν·/ ὁρῶ γὰρ ἡμῶν ἀσθενεστέρους ἄλλους": lines 9–10).[252] The hares find some temporary consolation in encountering those who are even more fearful than themselves.[253]

B102 also depicts hares as timid and cowardly creatures. The fable describes a utopian kingdom of animals ruled by a gentle and kind lion. A gathering of the animals takes place at which the animals file suits against each other. The wolf is penalized by the lamb and the leopard by the goat. Then a cowering hare says: "I have prayed for this day always, which will make the weak objects of fear for the strong" ("ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ταύτην / τὴν ἡμέρην ἀεί ποτ' ηὐχόμην, ἥτις / καὶ τοῖς βιαίοις φοβερὰ τἀσθενῆ θήσει": lines 10–12). The hare is delighted at the opportunity for justice but the hare is still described as 'cowering' (πτώξ: line 10). This suggests that even when a hare is effectively living in a protected utopia, it cannot adapt.

In spite of the fact that there are a number of fables that deal with the theme of war,[254] most of the occurrences of the emotion-terms φόβος or θάρσος do not occur in these fables but in fables that describe everyday activities such as farming and hunting.[255] By portraying φόβος and θάρσος in everyday contexts that involve individual behaviour rather than group behaviour, Babrius is able to depict the inner psychology of individual characters with greater insight. It

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[251] Suicide was viewed by Aristotle as an act of cowardice (see Arist. *NE* 3.7.13).

[252] Greek text as amended by Vaio 2001: 56-57. Note that line 9 of Vaio's Greek text has a typographical error (θήνσκειν instead of θνήσκειν).

[253] For other fables in which frogs are portrayed as weak and vulnerable see B24, B28 and B120.

[254] See B21, B31, B39, B70, B76, B85 and B93.

[255] The only fable that applies these terms to a military context is B31 in which a mouse 'takes courage' (θαρσήσας: line 12) by inciting a weasel to fight and thereby starting a war.

allows Babrius to focus on the emotional world of certain characters and to highlight certain aspects of the psychology of fear, such as the faint distinction between fear and bravado and the fact that it is only real and imminent danger that motivates action.

The core message about φόβος to emerge from the fables is that even though it is an instinctive emotion, it can also be directed or attenuated by reason. The fable characters, both animal and human, are depicted as responding in an instinctive way to φόβος. They run away from danger, they cry out in distress, they cling to others for safety, and they turn pale and speak through chattering teeth. After this instinctive reaction has been expressed, however, reason takes hold and the characters are shown behaving in ways that demonstrate a rational response to the threat. They move away from the danger, they recognize the warning signs, or they indicate to others that they are not foolish enough to face the danger directly. In this way, Babrius' fables present a picture of φόβος that is consistent with the way in which the emotion is presented and discussed elsewhere in Greek literature.[256] Aristotle, for example, suggested that men instinctively feel φόβος in response to certain events such as disgrace (ἀδοξία), poverty (πενία), disease (νόσος) and death (θάνατος).[257] At the same time, Aristotle also indicated that φόβος can be reasoned with, and he demonstrated this belief in outlining certain techniques that an orator can use to both inspire and counteract the influence of this emotion.[258]

It is also significant that φόβος is not condemned by Babrius. On the contrary, it is presented as a justifiable and sensible emotional reaction to a significant and imminent prospect of harm (usually death or injury). In contrast, θάρσος carries the risk of injury or death. Characters that recognize that a danger is

[256] For other accounts of physiological responses to φόβος see, for example, Hom. *Il.* 24.169-170; Ar. *Ra.* 286-308; Pl. *Cas.* 621-629.
[257] Arist. *NE* 3.6.3.
[258] Arist. *Rh.* 2.5.1-16.

both real and imminent and act promptly are portrayed as wise: for example, the cranes in B26, the country mouse in B108 and the lion in B1. In practical terms, the fables illustrate the necessity of managing an instinctive reaction and properly evaluating the degree of the threat. In this respect, the picture of φόβος in Babrius' fables is in line with Konstan's analysis of how this emotion was perceived by the ancient Greeks. Konstan suggests that an estimation and evaluation of the actual strength of the opposition was critical to the ancient Greek view of φόβος.[259] If the opposition was viewed as hostile and actually superior in strength, then φόβος was regarded as a justifiable response but if the opposition was equal to oneself in strength or not actually superior in strength, φόβος was regarded as unjustified.[260]

The fact that Babrius does not condemn φόβος as an emotion suggests that his views are somewhat removed from the Roman view of fear (*timor*). This emotion was frequently condemned by Roman philosophers and historians who associated it with corrupt personal morality.[261] Stoic philosophers, in particular, viewed it as an excessive emotional state that should be 'treated' by means of philosophy. Epictetus, for example, claimed to be immune from the fear of death as well as tyrants or guards with sharp swords because of the self-knowledge and freedom he obtained from the study of philosophy.[262] Cicero described fear as "inconstancy" (*inconstantia*) "weakness" (*inbecillitas*) and "feebleness" (*levitas*).[263] According to Cicero, philosophy provided the medicine by which a man might become free of fear.[264] Babrius' fables are somewhat removed from this view in that they do not advocate the eradication or cure of this emotion.

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[259] Konstan 2006: 141.
[260] See Konstan 2006: 138.
[261] See Tac. *Ann.* 15.57, 15.35, 16.15; Sal. *Cat.* 31; also the discussion in Levene 1997: 129.
[262] Epict. *Discourses* 4.7: On Fearlessness.
[263] Cic. *Tusc.* 4.30.64.
[264] Cic. *Tusc.* 2.4.11.

Babrius' fables also depict certain types as being particularly prone to φόβος; these types are depicted as hares, mice, deer and birds. Hares in particular are portrayed as having naturally timid and cowardly dispositions. This suggests that for certain types of people φόβος is an enduring personality trait, that is, a trait that characterises the individual across time and situations. The presentation of this concept in the fables is reminiscent of Theophrastus' humorous character sketch of the cowardly man (Δειλία).[265] In both the fables and Theophrastus' character sketch, φόβος afflicts certain types, causing them to experience the emotion when there is no imminent danger and distorting their thought processes and behaviour. When Theophrastus' coward is at sea, for example, he mistakes jutting rocks for pirate ships; he worries unnecessarily about the weather; he anticipates having to jump overboard, and he begs to be put ashore (*Char.* 25, lines 2–3). When he is on the battlefield, fear distorts the behaviour of the coward, causing him to neglect his duties as a soldier, to retreat from the battle and to be dishonest (*Char.* 25, lines 4–6).[266]

i. Ancient φόβος and θάρσος; modern fear and courage

In Babrius' fables, φόβος is portrayed as having both an instinctive and a rational element. There is some similarity between this portrayal and our modern concept of fear. Modern psychologists recognize that fear involves instinctive physiological arousal as well as a cognitive element which affects the way in which the stimulus is perceived[267] and a behavioral element.[268] Modern psychologists also recognize that fear can be a normal response and that it can be influenced by reason.[269] This is the basic concept underlying the modern 'treatment' of fear disorders.[270]

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[265] Thphr. *Char.* 25.

[266] For a discussion of the 'realism' of Theophrastus' sketch of the coward see Christ 2006: 102.

[267] Armfield 2006: 747.

[268] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 172.

[269] Gullone 2000: 429.

[270] Disorders include phobias, post traumatic stress disorder, panic disorders and generalized

In spite of this, there appear to be some major differences between the stimuli that are recognized as causative of fear. For Babrius, the only legitimate stimulus for φόβος that is depicted in the fables is a real and immediate threat to one's life or the prospect of serious injury. Babrius adopts a tone of ridicule when more trivial stimuli are involved.[271] In modern times, it is considered to be quite normal and common for people to fear lesser threats such as heights and public places in addition to more grave fears associated with personal injury or illness.[272] Although psychologists recognize that certain fears are not necessarily rational, there is some suggestion that there has been an evolution of types of fear over time and that fear in modern society is more inclined to be based on social circumstances rather than immediate threats to one's existence.[273] This may explain why the concept of θάρσος in Babrius' fables appears to differ from the modern concept of courage. In modern thought, courage is commonly thought to involve confronting the threat,[274] and this may well be an appropriate response if the threat does not involve endangering one's life. In the fables, direct confrontation with a real and imminent threat of danger leads to disaster. Avoiding a threat to one's life, rather than confronting it, is viewed as perfectly justified and, in most circumstances, it is recommended. This is entirely consistent with the fables' emphasis on survival and applying one's intelligence to situations that involve real and imminent risks.

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anxiety disorders (see Power and Dalgleish 2008: 178).

[271] By way of example, the child in B34 fears that he is dying because he has indigestion. His mother tells him that he is not dying at all; he has simply eaten too much. Similarly in B25, the hares appear ridiculous because they only gain confidence when they see other creatures that are even more timid.

[272] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 174. Also see Öhman 1993: 518.

[273] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 480.

[274] Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 488.

VIII. Conclusion

Babrius' fables constitute a useful body of evidence for the study of how certain emotions were conceptualised, how certain emotion-terms were used, and the moral framework that was applied to specific emotions. Babrius' fables particularly lend themselves to such a study because of their tendency to focus on the inner psychological world of the characters in addition to the events. Inevitably, as a work of fiction, there are limits to the extent to which the fables may be treated as source material for the study of ancient emotion. In particular, some allowance must be made for the connection between the fables and the genres of satire and comedy. On the other hand, the fables represent metaphors for real human behaviour. In order for the fables to fulfil this function, the behaviour of the imaginary characters in the fables must be recognisable and realistic. It is precisely because of this metaphorical quality that the fables (often inadvertently) reveal information about emotions and how they were expressed. Even on occasions when comedy and satire contribute a degree of exaggeration or distortion to this picture, this distortion can itself reveal something about the norms and expectations of the people of Babrius' day.

This chapter has yielded a number of insights into how certain emotions were conceptualised. I have found, for example, that, for Babrius, θυμός was not viewed as an internal state but an emotion that was brought about because of an external act or event. In the fables, expressions of θυμός are often portrayed as absurd. This suggests that the question of whether θυμός is justifiable or appropriate depended on there being a sufficient cause for the emotion as well as consideration of the surrounding circumstances. In this respect, I noted some similarities between Babrius' conception of θυμός and Aristotle's views (a finding that I will discuss further below). Νέμεσις, like θυμός, was viewed as a form of punishment for specific conduct but, unlike θυμός, it is expressed by a

divine force and it is always justified. For Babrius, ἔχθρα differs from both θυμός and νέμεσις in that it is not prompted by a moral evaluation of an individual's behaviour. Rather, it is an instinctive emotion that is expressed by those with power towards those who are powerless.

Babrius presents ἔρως as a spontaneous, overwhelming and irrational force and he places particular emphasis on its negative consequences. As for χάρις, the fables tend to portray situations in which this emotion is lacking because the relevant act of kindness is not performed in a manner that justifies reciprocity. The emotions signified by the noun λύπη and the verb χαίρω constitute an interesting pair. Babrius portrays λύπη as an enduring and overwhelming emotional state that leads to a desire for social isolation. In contrast, the verb χαίρω indicates a short-lived emotion that is rare and not a feature of social interaction. Finally, I examined φόβος, which is portrayed as an instinctive emotion and one to which certain types are particularly prone but one that can also be controlled and directed by reason. The merits of θάρσος depend on the surrounding circumstances and an evaluation of the relevant risk.

These insights are useful in that they indicate how specific emotions were evaluated from a moral standpoint. We have seen, for example, that Babrius presents νέμεσις as the deliverance of a justified punishment for inappropriate conduct. We have also seen the negative consequences that follow ἔρως and Babrius' cynical use of the verb χαίρω. This moral dimension of the portrayal of emotion is useful because it gives insight into the emotions that were considered appropriate or inappropriate in certain circumstances. It may also give us clues about the society to which Babrius belonged. It is notable, for example, that Babrius' conceptualisation of a number of emotions is sensitive to issues of hierarchy and status. Θυμός, for example, is expressed by those with power against the powerless; νέμεσις is justifiably expressed by a divine force in punishing humans; θυμός, φόβος and θάρσος are all characteristic of

competition and conflict between unequals, and the expression of χάρις between those of different status is portrayed as problematic. This suggests that the society from which the fables originated, and to which the fables refer, was hierarchical and status conscious and that the manner in which an individual expressed some emotions was deemed to be appropriate depending on his/her position within that hierarchy. In some cases, for example, the emotional reaction of a more powerful party is presented as justified, and we see this particularly in the case of θυμός and νέμεσις. In these cases, the expression of emotion is closely connected with the expression of authority. Yet, there is no favouritism toward one class or another. Some of the fables can be read as legitimising the behaviour of those in power by providing moral reinforcement for certain behaviours while other fables can be read as undermining the powerful through ridicule of their behaviour and the portrayal of negative consequences.

In some cases, the fables offer new insights into the way in which certain emotions may have been understood in Babrius' day. The portrayal of λύπη is particularly interesting because here we have examples of the intimate connection between the expression of this emotion and issues of social esteem and public image. Hitherto, λύπη had been interpreted by scholars as an emotion that did not have a 'social' element. Babrius' fables may prompt reconsideration of how this emotion was conceptualised. Another finding that is of interest is the fact that the fables never portray θυμός as an emotion that is felt between loved ones or kin. This suggests that Babrius' primary area of interest and concern was the expression of this emotion in the public, rather than private, domain. This raises interesting questions about the visibility of, and appropriate expression of, θυμός in the public and private spheres.

These new insights add to, corroborate and sometimes conflict with, the findings of other scholars in the study of ancient emotion. For example, some

scholars have questioned whether λύπη and χάρις were regarded as emotions by the ancient Greeks.[275] Babrius' use of both of these terms in the fables indicates that they *were* regarded as emotions, although, in both cases, we can also observe how the expression of these emotions was regulated by norms and expectations regarding social interaction and participation. The fable collection also points to some emotion-terms that have not received much attention in scholarly surveys of the emotional landscape of the ancient Greeks and Romans, such as ἔρως and the use of the verb χαίρω.[276] The fables indicate that these emotion-terms merit further exploration. The fables also suggest that there are aspects of θάρσος that may merit further investigation, particularly the notion that θάρσος is not always appropriate, which appears to contradict the philosophical view of θάρσος as an indisputably virtuous and ideal quality.

One perplexing finding is that emotion-terms like θυμός feature often in the collection, ἔρως and νέμεσις appear infrequently, and αἰσχύνη ('shame'), φθόνος ('envy') and ἔλεος ('pity') appear hardly at all. The latter group is particularly intriguing because these emotions are regarded by some scholars as part of the core emotional lexicon of both the ancient Greeks and Romans.[277] Yet, there are a number of reasons why certain emotion-terms might feature more than others. The frequency of emotion-terms like θυμός is appropriate to the prominence of the theme of conflict in the fable collection as a whole. In contrast, morally straightforward emotions, such as ἔρως and νέμεσις, feature less often in the collection. The former is depicted in a mostly negative moral light while the latter is depicted in a positive light. In some cases, an emotion-term may not be used in the fable collection because there was no specific term

[275] See Konstan 2006: 244-245, 156-168.

[276] Konstan discusses love (φιλία) but not ἔρως or χαίρω (Konstan 2006: 169-184, 244-258). Harris briefly mentions ἔρως (see Harris 2001: 277, 291, 343-344). Sorabji deals with various aspects of both emotions but mostly in relation to the views of Stoic philosophers (Sorabji 2000: 29-30, 47-51, 388-389). Neither emotion features in Braund and Gill (eds) 1997 and they are only very briefly mentioned in Kaster 2005: 9.

[277] Konstan, for example, devotes a chapter to each of these three (see Konstan 2006: 91-110, 111-128, and 201-218).

for the emotion in question. It has been observed, for example, that Greek and Roman societies did not have a distinct term for the emotion that we refer to as 'shame'.[278] Furthermore, the ancient Greek term αἰσχύνη, which is usually translated into English as 'shame', is rather different to our concept of shame.[279] This may explain why there is only one instance of the term in the fables,[280] although there are a number of fables that may depict the emotion.[281] In the case of φθόνος and ἔλεος, it is said that in ancient Greek society these two emotions were frequently contrasted as opposites.[282] In Babrius' collection, the emotion-term φθόνος appears only once in the main text of a fable (B122.9) while ἔλεος does not appear at all. The low incidence of φθόνος as an emotion-term is consistent with the emphasis on self-reliance and the underlying message of the fables that one should rely on one's inner resources rather than external help in order to survive.[283] The absence of the term ἔλεος might be explained by the suggestion that this emotion was most commonly expressed to kin and loved ones.[284] Given that these relationships are not a major feature of the fable collection, it is logical that this emotion-term also appears infrequently.

On the whole, Babrius' outlook on the emotions appears to have more in common with Aristotelian philosophy than Stoic philosophy. Babrius rarely, if ever, ventures so far as to condemn emotions in the manner of the Stoics. Rather, his fables explore the different circumstances in which the expression of

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[278] Konstan 2006: 92.

[279] Konstan 2006: 110. The critical elements of shame for the ancient Greeks are said to have been an act which revealed a character fault and caused a loss of reputation (see Konstan 2006: 92, 101). This concept seems to be more like a 'loss of face' rather than a feeling of personal worthlessness.

[280] In B5, a cock loses a fight and is said to 'skulk into the house out of shame' (ἔκυπτ' ἐς οἴκου γωνίην ὑπ' αἰσχύνης: line 4). The cock feels disgraced before the hens. See Vaio 2001: 20-21.

[281] See B3, B22, B72, B120, B131 and B139.

[282] Konstan 2006: 120.

[283] The term φθόνος appears in the epimythion of B59 in which the reader of the fable is explicitly counselled to avoid φθόνος. The epimythion says 'Try to do something and do not choose envy' (πειρῶ τι ποιεῖν, τὸν φθόνον δὲ μὴ κρίνειν: line 17). The emphasis is on affirmative action rather than comparing one's own situation with that of others. The text of this epimythion is discussed by Vaio 2001: 84-86.

[284] See Konstan 2006: 211.

a particular emotion may be appropriate or inappropriate. This is closer to the Aristotelian approach which emphasised the importance of conducting oneself in the right way, at the right moment and for the right reasons. Babrius' presentation of θυμός, in particular, is in some ways similar to Aristotle's discussion of anger in the *Rhetoric*. In addition, there are similarities between Aristotle's and Babrius' presentation of φόβος and the depiction of circumstances in which χάρις is not warranted. Yet, there are also some important differences between Aristotle's discussion of certain emotions and Babrius' portrayal of the same emotions in his fables. While Aristotle maintains that a process of moral evaluation underlies the expression of ἔχθρη as an emotion, Babrius' presentation of this emotion suggests that the moral blameworthiness of the target is irrelevant. The fact that the material in Babrius' fables sometimes converges with, and sometimes diverges from, the views of other philosophers and writers indicates that the fable collection covers the same moral terrain but has its own unique approach.

In portraying different emotions, the fables also yield a number of possible insights into social life, behaviour and gender differences in Babrius' day. Babrius' presentation of νέμεσις, for example, provides further insight into the reverence and respect with which this goddess was regarded. Furthermore, in the discussion of ἔχθρη, I noted that the prominence of this term in the fables may reflect Epstein's view that Roman public life at this time was characterised by enmity, hostility and competition. In the discussion of ἔρως, I noted that the fables that portray this emotion give interesting insights into how both female and male sexuality was viewed. Similarly, in the discussion of λύπη, I suggested that this emotion tends to be portrayed as concomitant with the maternal role and that it may have been considered inappropriate for men to express λύπη.

By comparing the ancient and modern outlook on specific emotions, we have also gained a number of insights into key differences between the conceptualisation of certain emotions in each period. Babrius does not portray expressions of θυμός toward loved ones or kin, for example, whereas modern research suggests that it is precisely these individuals who are the most frequent targets of anger. Babrius' portrayal of ἔχθρη as a characteristic of certain social relationships is very different to the modern concept of hatred which views certain traits as being inherently negative. Babrius' concept of ἔρως as an emotion that is inspired by an external force is very different to the modern concept of erotic attraction as a mixture of subjective feelings, physiological changes, and responses within the individual.[285] Similarly, Babrius' concept of νέμεσις as an external and divine force is very different to the modern concept of righteous indignation as an internal 'human' state. The comparison of ancient and modern views of certain emotions has brought important differences into relief and highlighted the linguistic and other challenges in attempting to comprehend and relate to the emotional landscape of a different time and a different society.

[285] Power and Dalgleish 2008: 344.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The role of the fable in world literature is such that fables have been described as the literary equivalent of grain in world commerce.[1] This analogy is apt because, despite their humble exterior, fables hold great intrinsic value and they constitute a crucial component of our literary inheritance and our ways of thought. Fables are known throughout the world and they have been, and continue to be disseminated, transformed, cultivated and consumed. They are remarkably enduring yet adaptable narrative forms that have continued to evolve as each society and era has adapted the fables to suit its own interpretations, applications and stylistic preferences.

Babrius' collection of fables belongs to an esteemed literary tradition that is well over four and a half thousand years old. The oldest literary fables are from Sumer and Akkadia and it is thought that these stories were introduced into the oral tradition in ancient Greece in the sixth and seventh centuries BCE. In ancient Greece, Aesop was regarded as the father of fable and his fables were widely known and widely used throughout all levels of society. In extant texts from the Greek world, fables are retold and alluded to in a remarkably wide variety of contexts, from philosophy and scientific works to comedy and poetry. As is evident from their widespread usage and renown, fables were not viewed as trivial nursery tales. They were considered to be an intellectual resource for adults and a tool for persuasion.

In the Roman world too, the fable was considered to be of great import for education and rhetoric. From the second to the fourth centuries CE there is evidence that Babrius' fables were being used by rhetoricians for the purposes of language teaching and instruction in rhetoric. Given that rhetorical training was the foundation stone for all education and professional training at the time,

[1] Crusius quoted in Holzberg 2002: 10.

this is a good indicator of the significance that was attributed to the fables. During the first and second centuries CE, fable collections also came into their own as literary works. By writing collections of fables in verse, Babrius and Phaedrus gave fables entirely new status as narrative forms that had independent literary merit. This significant development continues to resonate in the manner in which fables are employed in contemporary times.

In spite of the importance of the fable in literature, Babrius' fables have, for the most part, remained in the dark in classical scholarship.[2] Viewed as a product of an inferior and imitative poet of the Second Sophistic period, Babrius' fables have been relegated to a second-class category of minor works of literature.[3] The main objective of this thesis has been to bring the fables of Babrius out of obscurity and into the light of modern classical scholarship. By examining the collection as a work of literature, I have endeavoured to make a new contribution to scholarship by moving away from questions of textual history to a thorough examination of the narratives themselves, their content and their significance.

The first key finding of this thesis is that, contrary to the suggestions of earlier scholars, Babrius' fables do not advocate an ideology of conformity that favours those in power. Their view is too simplistic to encapsulate the plurality of perspectives that are contained in the collection. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated that in the midst of presenting a world that is characterised by violence, conflict and competition, Babrius presents a variety of options for survival, many of which are opposed to the notion of meekness and submission. The core message of the fables is that man *can* improve his life and his chances of survival if he undertakes to exercise certain virtues, namely, moderation, truthfulness, self-reliance and intelligence. In my view, this core

[2] Cf. Murray's comment that "Babrius, the fabulist, is no poet" (Murray 1897: 393).
[3] See Perry 1959: 29.

message is not being promulgated by a member of an élite group seeking to reinforce the oppression of the lower classes. In fact, as I and others have argued, fable collections give insight into moral precepts that were widely shared throughout society, at the top, as well as at the bottom, of the social scale. Babrius' fable collection gives insights into a system of values that was common to the majority and that formed part of a process of education and socialization by which each successive generation learnt a system of practical ethics to help them succeed in life. In Chapter Five, I extended this line of thought to an analysis of Babrius' views on religion, friendship and family, and, here too, I found that Babrius' fables reinforce widely held social norms by satirising certain practices and aspects of private and social life.

The second key finding of this thesis is that Babrius' fables have a two-fold purpose, namely, to tell fables in an engaging and entertaining way but also to convey a moral message. In opposition to other scholars, I have argued that these two objectives are equally balanced in the fables, and that Babrius' interest in the former has not outweighed the latter. In Chapter Four, I discussed Babrius' retelling of the myth of the golden race as an instance of his use of myth to critique contemporary *mores* and to draw attention to the moral defects of the present generation compared to the superior moral values that existed in the past. I then presented a detailed analysis of the moral framework underlying the fables by means of which I was able to identify the traits and behaviours that are censured in the fables as well as those that are praised. In this way, I demonstrated that Babrius has an unmistakable and discernible moral agenda.

In addition to discussing the moral impact of the fables, this thesis has demonstrated that Babrius' fables integrate stylistic aspects that make them entertaining and appealing as narratives. Hitherto, Babrius' style had been criticised as overly elaborate and as outweighing the moral content of the

fables. Importantly, the present study has revealed that the style of the fables is crucial to the effectiveness of the fable's moral message and it plays a more complex role in the narrative than has previously been thought. In Chapter Two, it was demonstrated that Babrius' use of detail and description adds realism to the narratives and depth to the characterisation. It also enables the audience to construct vivid mental pictures of the action and events. We saw that Babrius' frequent use of direct speech creates an impression of proximity to the characters and increases audience involvement by enabling the audience to evaluate and interpret a character's words for themselves. Later, in Chapter Four, we saw that Babrius' use of internal evaluation strategies involves the audience more closely in the story so that the impact of the moral lesson is not just witnessed, but felt and experienced simultaneously with the protagonist. All of these stylistic devices are crucial to Babrius' narratives and they all contribute to the effectiveness of Babrius' storytelling technique.

This study has also examined how Babrius' fable collection intersects with the genres of satire and comedy and demonstrated the complexity of the fables as a narrative genre. I have outlined how Babrius appears to have been following in the footsteps of Roman satirists who used fables as a medium for their satire, particularly Ennius, Lucilius, Martial and Horace. In addition, I have shown how the connection between Babrius' fables and the genre of satire is evident in Babrius' choice of metre and all of the associations that the writing of iambic poetry carried. His use of crude language, irony, and his inclusion of fables satirising kingship also add to the satirical dimension of the fables. Although I have argued that Babrius' fables have a satiric edge, I have also demonstrated that this is balanced by a degree of humour. The fables mock different categories of 'others' and they delight in sexual humour and the portrayal of embarrassing and compromising situations. In this way, humour works alongside satire to create fables that are entertaining but also incisive: this is a highly effective combination. Furthermore, irony, satire and humour share a

similar function in encouraging an audience to temporarily stand back from life and to view the world through a different lens. Babrius has successfully balanced irony, satire and humour in order to encourage this viewpoint.

The third key finding of this thesis is that Babrius' fables are unique in the way in which they portray the inner psychology and emotions of the characters. This is apparent in the way in which Babrius demonstrates the effects of conflict on the inner world of the characters; in Babrius' frequent use of direct speech, and in his tendency to emphasise the suffering of his protagonists. Compared with other fable collections, particularly the *Augustana*, I have demonstrated that Babrius' fables contain more second-order reasoning by means of which characters reflect on their objectives and goals and the consequent outcomes. In Chapter Three, I suggested that this indicated a trend toward a more 'subjective-individualist' conception of personality and that this coincides with the dating of the collection to the first to second centuries CE. I noted that similar tendencies have been observed in the ancient novels produced in the same period, particularly in the use of dialogue, speeches and monologues to enhance the dramatic quality of the narratives and to give insights into the inner world of the characters. The uniquely 'psychological' emphasis of Babrius' fables also enabled us to analyse a number of emotion-terms that are used in the fables, the moral context in which these terms are used, and the manner in which the corresponding emotions are conceptualised and portrayed.

The study of emotion-terms that are frequently used in Babrius' fables has yielded a number of interesting results and opened new avenues for research. In general, scholars studying ancient emotion have tended to rely on works of rhetoric, philosophy, poetry, history and drama. In Chapter Six, I argued that Babrius' fable collection is an untapped yet fertile resource for such studies not only because of its uniquely 'psychological' flavour but because it portrays

emotions within a clearly discernible moral framework which enables us to discern how specific emotions were viewed from a moral standpoint. By studying the use of several emotion-terms in detail, I demonstrated how certain emotions were conceptualised and viewed in Babrius' day and in what ways these insights corroborate or conflict with the findings of other scholars. This study has also enlarged upon our understanding of how the conceptualisation of emotion in ancient times differs from contemporary times. By using the tools of cognitive and social psychology in particular, this study has opened entirely new pathways for interdisciplinary work.

In addition to these findings, it is pertinent at this point to gather together some observations about the poet himself. The first is that Babrius has an observable preference for, or inclination toward, Greek thinking and philosophy rather than an outlook that we might identify as Roman or Stoic. This is not altogether surprising given the cultural inheritance of fables from Greek society as well as the fact that writers of the Second Sophistic period in general are said to exhibit a preference for Greek literature and thought, albeit in different ways and to different degrees. In Babrius' case, this inclination is apparent in different ways. In Chapter Six, for example, we saw that Babrius' use of emotion-terms and the ways in which he conceptualises certain emotions has more in common with Aristotelian views of emotion than Stoic views. Babrius does not use the moral force of his fables to condemn certain emotions, rather, he presents a variety of circumstances in which an emotion may, or may not be, appropriate. The audience is led toward certain conclusions about conduct and behaviour without having moral condemnation thrust at them. In other ways, too, Babrius betrays a familiarity with Greek thought and literature. His use of the choliambic metre suggests that he has made a self-conscious decision to connect with an ancient Greek tradition of satirical writing stretching back to poets such as Archilochus, in the seventh century BCE, and Callimachus, in the fourth century BCE. His retelling of myth (such as the story of Tereus, Procne and

Philomela) also betrays a preference for Greek versions over Roman ones. Furthermore, Babrius' retelling of the myth of the golden race and his avoidance of the Roman concept of the 'golden age' suggest a desire to tap into the rich vein of Greek moral philosophy and to invoke the many Greek poets and philosophers who referred to the myth of the golden race in order to demonstrate the moral superiority of those who lived in an earlier time.

Babrius' collection is characterised by its ironic outlook. In Chapter Two I discussed Babrius' use of irony as a device and I argued that it took considerable skill on Babrius' part to inject irony into his fables by selecting events, arranging them, and adjusting the timing of events and the tone of the fables to achieve the maximum impact. I suggested that the cultivation of irony in literary writing requires a poet to have an ironic view of the world, in which one is able to stand apart from the events of life, to act as an observer, and to achieve a sense of freedom from the captive viewpoint in which man otherwise exists. This viewpoint has allowed Babrius to present his material in a way that prompts us, his audience, to adopt the same ironic perspective. In this way, Babrius uses irony to try to change his audience's cognitive environment and to expose his audience to new and different ways of viewing the world.

In addition to this, we examined the evidence that indicates that Babrius was most probably located in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, most likely Syria or Asia Minor. This evidence includes Babrius' language, but also the content of his fable collection and some evidence of the dispersal of the work throughout Egypt and Syria. In Chapter One, I suggested that Babrius' probable location in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire placed him at a critical juncture between the Mediterranean, on the one side, and the ancient near East on the other. We saw that Babrius' own prologues indicate that he was aware of the existence of an ancient fable tradition prior to Aesop and I pointed out various similarities between Babrius' collection and the fables that

have emerged from Akkadia and Sumeria. Babrius' probable location in Syria or Asia Minor is, I think, important for our understanding of the role that Babrius may have played in the transmission of fables between the East and West. Not only did Babrius occupy a privileged position at a crossroads in a geographical sense, he also occupied an important position in a temporal sense. Fable collections that were produced in the first to second centuries CE were viewed for the first time as works of literature. This had a profound impact on the development of the fable genre in the West in the centuries to come.

Appendix 1: List of Fables

B1. Hunter and Lion
B2. Farmer and Mattock
B3. Goatherd and Goat
B4. Fisherman
B5. Two Cockerels
B6. Fisherman and Little Fish
B7. Horse and Ass
B8. Arab and Camel
B9. Fisherman and Flute
B10. Man, Slave-girl and Aphrodite
B11. Man and Fox
B12. Swallow and Nightingale
B13. Farmer and Stork
B14. Bear and Fox
B15. Athenian and Theban
B16. Nurse and Wolf
B17. Cat and Cock
B18. Sun and North Wind
B19. Fox and Grapes
B20. Ox-driver and Herakles
B21. Oxen and Butchers
B22. Man with Two Mistresses
B23. Cattle-driver and Lion
B24. Sun and Frogs
B25. Hares and Frogs
B26. Cranes and Farmer
B27. Man and Weasel
B28. Ox and Toad
B29. Old Horse
B30. Man and Statue of Hermes
B31. Mice and Weasels
B32. Man and Weasel
B33. Birds and Farmer
B34. Boy Who Ate Too Much
B35. Mother Ape
B36. Oak Tree and Reeds
B37. Calf and Bull
B38. Fir Tree and Wedges
B39. Dolphins, Whales and Crab
B40. Camel in River
B41. Lizard
B42. Dog at Dinner Party
B43. Vain Deer
B44. Three Bulls and Lion
B45. Goatherd
B46. Old Stag and Friends
B47. Old Man and Three Sons
B48. Herm and Dog
B49. Workman and Fate
B50. Fox and Timber Feller
B51. Widow and Sheep
B52. Oxen and Cart
B53. Fox and Wolf
B54. Eunuch
B55. Ox and Ass
B56. Mother Ape
B57. Hermes and Wagon of Lies
B58. Zeus and Jar
B59. Momus
B60. Mouse in Soup
B61. Hunter and Fisherman
B62. Mule
B63. Man and Hero
B64. Fir Tree and Bramble
B65. Crane and Peacock
B66. Prometheus and Man
B67. Wild Ass and Lion
B68. Apollo and Zeus
B69. Dog and Hare
B70. War and Insolence
B71. Farmer and Sea
B72. Jackdaw
B73. Kite and Horse
B74. Horse, Ox and Dog
B75. Man and Physician
B76. Knight and Horse
B77. Fox and Crow
B78. Sick Raven
B79. Dog and Shadow
B80. Camel
B81. Ape and Fox
B82. Lion and Mouse
B83. Groom and Horse
B84. Gnat and Bull

B85. Dogs and Wolves
B86. Fox and Tree
B87. Dog and Hare
B88. Larks
B89. Wolf and Lamb
B90. Mad Lion
B91. Bull and Goat
B92. Fearful Hunter
B93. Wolves and Sheep
B94. Wolf and Crane
B95. Lion, Fox and Deer
B96. Wolf and Ram
B97. Lion and Bull
B98. Lion and Maiden
B99. Eagle and Lion
B100. Dog and Wolf
B101. Wolf and Lions
B102. Lion King
B103. Lion and Fox
B104. Dog and Bell
B105. Wolf, Sheep and Lion
B106. Lion, Ape and Fox
B107. Lion and Mouse
B108. Country Mouse and City Mouse
B109. Crabs
B110. Man and Dog
B111. Merchant and Ass
B112. Bull and Mouse
B113. Man, Sheep and Dog
B114. Lamp
B115. Tortoise and Eagle
B116. Boy, Wife and Husband
B117. Man and Ants
B118. Swallow and Snake
B119. Craftsman and Statue of Hermes
B120. Frog Doctor
B121. Hen and Cat
B122. Ass and Wolf
B123. Hen that Laid Golden Eggs
B124. Fowler and Cock
B125. Ass on Roof
B126. Man and Truth
B127. Zeus and Hermes
B128. Sheepdog and Sheep
B129. Ass and Dog
B130. Fox and Wolf
B131. Young Man and Swallow
B132. Sheep and Wolf
B133. Ass and Fox
B134. Snake's Head and Tail
B135. Partridge and Cat
B136. Old Man and Son
B137. Eagle and Jackdaw
B138. Farmer and Partridge
B139. Ass in Lion's Skin
B140. Ant and Grasshopper
B141. Ass and Beggars
B142. Oak Trees and Zeus
B143. Farmer and Snake

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